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FOUR LECTURES
ON THE
Evidences of Christianity;

DELIVERED IN SOUTHWARK, 1834,

TO THE
JUNIOR MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

SECOND AMERICAN EDITION.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting to the public the following Lectures, the editor deems it incumbent upon him, in justice to the gentleman who delivered them, to make a few explanatory observations respecting their publication; and, to account for any errors which may be detected by the literary reader, it may, perhaps, only be necessary to mention that they are printed from the notes of the short-hand writer who took them down at the time of their delivery.

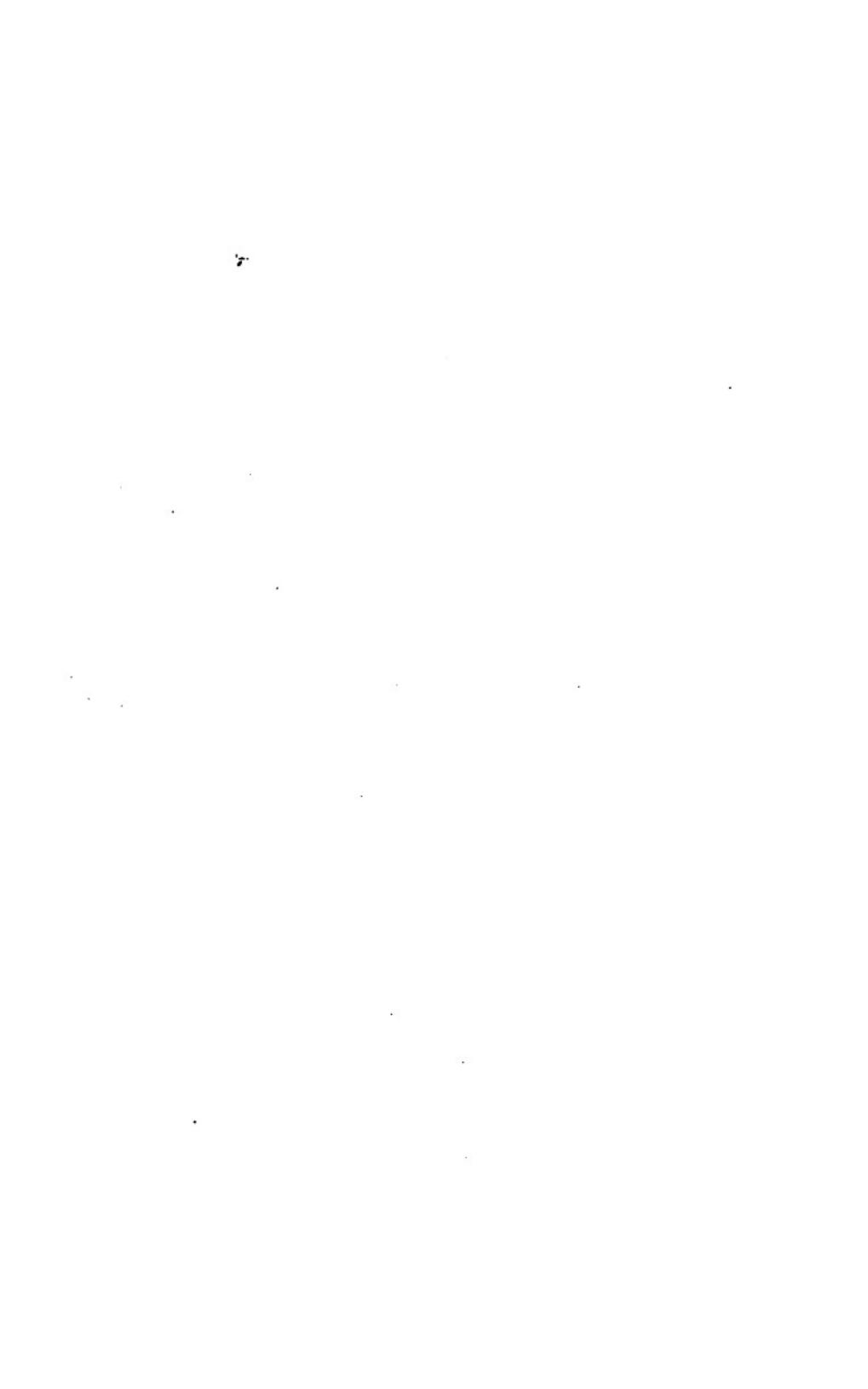
Much indeed it is to be regretted, and by no one more than the editor, that they have not made their appearance with the sanction and revision of the learned author; at the same time, it cannot fail to strike the intelligent reader that, considering their extemporaneous character, these lectures, upon subjects which embrace so wide and multifarious a range of observation, both literary and

scientific, amply vindicate Mr. Gurney's reputation as an eminent Biblical critic; and, though his correction while passing through the press would have prevented many little defects that now exist in the work, it is not improbable that, from his appreciation of the importance of the subject, they would have been deprived of much of their present features as oral discourses.

Should it be urged by any that their publication is needless, as so many learned and valuable works connected with Biblical literature have been prepared for the press, the editor would reply, and believes that the experience of most of his readers will concur with him, that the mind which may feel incapable or indisposed to grapple with the arguments of a studied treatise will pleasantly listen to the easy, unlaboured eloquence of a *viva voce* lecture. And the unmingle satisfaction expressed by those who heard these lectures, the editor hopes, will prove a sufficient apology for this endeavour to extend their benefit to that very large portion of the Society and the public in general who had not that advantage. Their simple and single aim seems to be to point out and to prove how irresistible is the authority, how matchless

the beauty, and how adapted to the condition of man is the revelation, of the Holy Scriptures. And if they conduce, in however trifling a degree, to this great end, the editor cannot but believe that their esteemed author, however he may have disliked their unauthorized circulation, will be among the first to rejoice at the results.





FIRST LECTURE.

ON THE
GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

I SHOULD like my young friends to figure to themselves the case of a person who is entirely unacquainted with the Christian religion, but who, nevertheless, is competent to inquire into those circumstances and those historical facts which prove its truth. I should like them to suppose that such a person is provided with a copy of the New Testament, and that he should take the opportunity of giving it a careful perusal. It is quite impossible that a person so circumstanced should fail to be extremely struck with the contents of the volume. He would find throughout the volume that air of simplicity, that naturalness, and that remarkable moral and spiritual weight, which would at once suggest the truth to him that it is a

book of no common order; nor could he fail to be peculiarly struck by the account contained in that volume of the wondrous person whose life and death and resurrection and doctrine it so clearly describes,—a person claiming the divine character, and, at the same time, showing forth all human perfections; and, supposing him to be a candid inquirer after truth, there are two questions which would immediately arise with him respecting this extraordinary book,—a book to which the whole compass of his literary researches would afford him no parallel,—nothing at all comparable to it in point of weight, beauty, power, and moral cogency:—he would ask himself, in the first place, Is this book genuine? and, in the next place, Is this book authentic?

I wish my young friends to remark the distinction between *genuineness* and *authenticity*; it is of importance, in all inquiries of the present kind. When we say that a book is genuine, we mean that it is no forgery; that it was truly written by the persons whose names it bears, and in the age in which it professes to have been produced. When we say that a book is authentic, we mean that the contents of it are true; that the history which it contains, and the circumstances which it relates, are truly described, and have really happened.

Before we inquire into the authenticity of a book, and into the truth of the history which it relates, the question of its genuineness arises

in the first instance, and must be disposed of before we go further. It so happens, that the genuineness of the books of which the New Testament is composed has been the subject of more critical and more literary inquiry, and of a clearer and more elaborate investigation, than any books which have ever been written; and the result of that investigation is, indeed, most satisfactory. He would be esteemed a fool, or at least entirely ignorant, in the critical world and among those who are accustomed to scholastic literature, who would dare, for a moment, to dispute the genuineness of the New Testament. The plain fact is, that we are in possession of evidence of its genuineness unspeakably superior to that of any other ancient book whatever, unless, indeed, it be the Old Testament, of which I shall soon afterwards speak.

I do not know whether my young friends are acquainted with the method which is usually adopted by critics in order to prove the genuineness of any ancient book. There are various criterions by which it is effected: there are external and there are internal evidences. In the first place comes the question, Has this book been quoted by writers who have lived in subsequent ages? is it recognised by persons who wrote on the same subject, as the ground of what we may now call their science? Now, we find, and we all know, that there is no book so largely quoted in the present day, by speakers and by writers, on any subject connected with

religion, as the New Testament; and thousands and tens of thousands of volumes might now be produced, without the smallest difficulty, all of which would be found teeming with quotations from the New Testament; but the strength of our cause lies here,—that the quotations which are made from the New Testament present to us a series, which begins in the first century of the church of Christ, and of which the only termination is to be found in the present day. It is not that the New Testament is largely quoted *now*; it is that it was largely quoted one thousand six hundred years ago, and quoted even to a considerable extent within a few years after the book was written. When the New Testament was composed,—the four Gospels by the four Evangelists, and the Epistles by the apostles whose names they bear; the book of Revelation by the Apostle John, and the book of Acts, by Luke, the companion of Paul,—the manuscripts which contained the writings were circulated by degrees; and they were written in the language which then pervaded the civilized world to a far greater extent than any other language.

You may ask how persons who were accustomed, generally, to speak the Hebrew and Syrian languages, which was the case with most of the apostles and Evangelists, should write in Greek; and the answer is, that the Greek was the pervasive language of the day, and was understood both by Jews and Gentiles,

to a very large extent; all their manuscripts, therefore, soon obtained a wide circulation; and we find quotations from different parts of the New Testament, even in the first century. Barnabas wrote an epistle, which is not included in the canon of scripture, and does not bear the marks of scripture, but which is traced by the writers of the first century: this contains some quotations from the New Testament. Clement of Rome lived nearly at the close of the first century; he was, in fact, contemporary with the Apostle Paul, who mentions him, and we have some of his genuine productions in our hands: he wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, and, in this epistle, he makes large quotations from and plain references to the epistle which Paul had written to the same church: he says, "Take in your hands the Epistle of the Apostle Paul." This they could never have done, if the Epistle of Paul had not existed; and then he goes on to quote the words of Paul. What can be more satisfactory? what can more plainly prove the genuineness of Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians? But I should like any man to compare with the Epistle to the Corinthians all the other epistles of Paul, and he will find that they are all written in the same style; in the same inimitable mode of thought and composition; in the same peculiar form: and no one can for a moment doubt, that if the Epistle to the Corinthians is genuine, all the other epistles are genuine also;

they all come from the same mind, and from the same pen.

It is an interesting circumstance, that Clement of Rome quoted very largely from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and, as this epistle is anonymous, it is a matter of considerable importance that we are in possession of a most undoubted evidence, in Clement's writings, of the existence of that important part of scripture in the apostolic age. About the time that Clement lived at Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp lived in Asia, and they also quoted from the Gospels and Epistles, Ignatius particularly. We then go on a little further, and we come to a very important person, Justin Martyr, who lived in the year 147, and wrote a controversy with the Jews, on the subject of the Christian religion: his works are in our hands; he also wrote an Apology for Christianity, addressed to the Roman emperor; and in his books we find quotations, of a most clear and explicit nature, and very numerous, both from the Gospels and Epistles. About the year 170, a man of the name of Tatian published a Harmony of the Gospels. Of course he could not have compared the Gospels together, and put them all into one concentrated form, if they had not existed and been widely circulated during his life. Soon afterwards we come to Clemens of Alexandria, and Tertullian,—one in Egypt and the other at Carthage, or in the neighbourhood of Carthage; and I venture to say, that there

are more quotations from the New Testament, in the writings of Tertullian alone, than there are from the works of Cicero, in all the authors who have lived since Cicero, who have taken any notice of him: in fact, the New Testament is infused into the writings of Tertullian; and, if any one of you would take the trouble of collecting the quotations from the New Testament, you would have almost all the New Testament itself: and almost the same observation applies to Clemens of Alexandria. While they were flourishing, a great luminary appeared in the person of Irenæus, who lived about the year 170. He wrote a book against the heretics of the day, and, in order to prove that those heretics had taken a false ground, he refutes all their opinions from passages of the New Testament: his works are also in our hands.

Then we go forward to Origen, who was a man of a very extraordinary character, a Platonic philosopher probably, converted to Christianity: he lived in Lesser Asia; a man of prodigious learning, and whose works are very voluminous. They are now in our hands; and it is a most satisfactory circumstance that they teem with quotations from the Gospels and Epistles, and, in fact, from every part both of the Old and New Testaments; and what is worthy of remark is, that the person against whom he wrote, whose name was Celsus, a bitter enemy to Christianity, freely admits, that those writings from which Origen quotes were

the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. Now, there are few things more satisfactory than the plain testimony of an enemy; we know that there is no partiality in our favour here. A bitter enemy to Christianity could say nothing against the genuineness of the book, so early as the third century: we may rest assured, that nothing ever could be said, or ever can be said in future, against its genuineness. After the time of Origen, authors multiply on us in every direction: the writings of the ancient Fathers are very voluminous, and it would be quite in vain to go over the list of them; they are filled with quotations from the New Testament, just in the same way as the works of modern theologians. But it is worthy of remark, that we have not merely quotations from the sacred volumes: many of them wrote commentaries on it; and they could not write commentaries on a book that did not exist. And, what is still more important, others engaged themselves in producing versions of this book in other languages, and some of the versions of the New Testament are of a very early date. Probably one of the very best versions of the New Testament is the Syriac Peschito; and this is traced, by the learned, to the first century. It is a most beautiful and literal version of the book, and certainly is not of a later date than the second century. During the first and second centuries, the old Latin version was written; and modern investigation has brought

to light another version, of a very curious kind, in the language of Upper Egypt, also supposed to have been written in the second century.

Do not you perceive what amazingly strong evidence we have of the genuineness of the volume, in those distinct quotations from it, made in the first and second centuries? In subsequent centuries, the versions were very much increased and multiplied. So that we have a long, unbroken line of quotations, we have commentaries, we have harmonies, we have versions; we have, in fact, a flood of critical light, bearing externally on this subject; and no man, who is in the least degree acquainted with this kind of investigation, can entertain the smallest doubt of the genuineness of the New Testament. However, I wish particularly to mention a very great man, who arose in the fourth century. His name was Eusebius: he lived at Cesarea, in Syria; was a man of prodigious learning, and wrote a history of the church; he was extremely fond of critical pursuits. About the time when Eusebius lived, (the year 315 after Christ,) the books of the New Testament were very largely circulated in the hands of friends and enemies: they were distributed in Asia, Africa, and Europe,—in short, in every part of the Roman empire. They were read by persons of every persuasion. Christianity was at that time making rapid way through the whole boundaries of the Roman empire, and became the established religion of

the Roman empire within ten years of the time of Eusebius. At that time Eusebius, the very prince of critics, one of the most deliberate and learned of inquirers in reference to this subject, in speaking of the books of the New Testament, says, that "the four Gospels, the book of Acts, the Epistles of Paul, the First Epistle of Peter, and the First of John, were, at that time, universally allowed to be genuine productions: these are by far the greater part of the whole volume." And, notwithstanding the great extent to which it was circulated, there was but one unanimous feeling,—a sentiment among both friends and enemies; his expressions are, "that they are universally confessed to be genuine;" and then he mentions (and it shows the precision with which he inquired into the subject, and that he took nothing on trust) that there were some persons who had raised doubts respecting the Second and Third Epistles of John, the books of Revelation, of Peter, and James; but he gives plain evidence that those are also genuine. In the year 365, there was a general conclave of the bishops of the Christian church, held at Laodicea, where they finally inquired into that subject, and came to a unanimous decision, that the whole canon of the New Testament, as we now receive it, was a genuine canon. Every part of it was proved to be genuine; and at the same time (and it shows the precision with which they inquired) they rejected a variety of spurious Gospels; for there were

circulated spurious imitations of the true Gospels, and of the Epistles of Paul :—and I should like very much for my young friends, who wish to go into the subject, to compare the genuine Gospels and Epistles with those spurious imitations,—if they can be called imitations which imitate only by a kind of mockery. You cannot read a single page of the New Testament without feeling, in your own minds, a certainty and a conviction, which you cannot get rid of, that what you read is genuine. You cannot read a single page of the spurious productions without being immediately satisfied that they *are* spurious ; the whole tenor and manner of them are totally different. In point of fact, all those spurious productions were soon banished from the church, and are now forgotten and rarely heard of ; but they are still in the hands of literary men, and prove their own falsity by their internal weakness.

These external evidences, which are so numerous, so harmonious, and so strong, far beyond those which are brought to bear on any other ancient book in the world, are supported by internal evidences of the most precise and definite character. The first of these, (and I appeal to the memories of my young friends as I go on—I hope you will write down these things on the tablet of the memory : they are worth remembering,) and main internal evidence of the genuineness of the New Testament, is the language in which it is written. That lan-

guage, as I told you before, was Greek ; but it was Greek of a peculiar kind ; it was Greek replete with Hebrew idioms. With the single exception of the works of Luke, who was himself a Grecian, the whole of the New Testament is written in Hebrew-Greek ; the language which a Jew could write, and only a Jew. You know that after the first century there were no Jewish Christians, or scarcely any at all,—none that we know of ; and the Fathers of the Greek church, who wrote in common Greek, were no more capable of writing the Greek of the New Testament, than you would be of writing any language quite foreign to you. It is quite certain that there were no other Christians capable of writing the language in which the New Testament is written, except during the apostolic age itself ; and here is a broad internal evidence of the most important character. But again : there is nothing by which a spurious book is so well detected, as by its anachronisms ; that is to say, by its containing an account of circumstances which are proved, by subsequent and collateral investigation, not to have happened at the time of that history to which the book professes to relate ; and these spurious Gospels are all of them disproved by the most absurd anachronisms respecting their chronology. But the New Testament, although it has been in the hands of investigators for so many ages, is not found to contain a single absurdity or anachronism of this description.

The history of the New Testament tallies in all its points with the profane history of the time; and the accounts which it contains, of the manners of the Jews, of the customs of the Romans, of the Roman governors, of the Roman laws, and of a variety of other particulars, since then proved, are all found to coincide, with the most beautiful precision, with the accounts that we find respecting the Jews in the works of Josephus, in the first century; and with accounts which we find of the history and manners of the Romans, in their own authors. What can account for this harmony? Nothing can but the genuineness of the book. Now, judge as a specimen, and here is a point which bears both upon its genuineness and upon its authenticity or truth; you are aware how many individuals are mentioned in the New Testament, attaching to the family of Herod. I will venture to say, that there was no family, whose actions are recorded in ancient history, so intricate as the family of Herod, or scarcely any; a variety of individuals, under peculiar circumstances, bearing the name of Herod, and therefore very great confusion in their history,—Herod the Great, Herod Archelaus and his brethren, and Herod Agrippa; and several others; and their history is interwoven in a very peculiar manner, and it is exceedingly difficult to pick it out, though it may be done, from the works of Josephus. All these Herods are named in the New Testament, and in a very natural manner;

and we find, when we compare it side by side with the information respecting the Herod family contained in Josephus, that the two perfectly tally together; and nothing can account for the fact but the truth of both histories.

So much for the genuineness of the New Testament; and it is really delightful to be able to say, that there is no ancient book existing in any language, of which the genuineness is so largely and so satisfactorily demonstrated as that of the Gospels and Epistles, and every part of the New Testament.

Then we come to the question of its *authenticity*. I will suppose that the inquirer after truth, having investigated the subject with a critical eye, is fully satisfied in his own mind that the book is genuine: he says, "Well, but is the book true?" Why, the very fact that the book itself is genuine, and written by the persons whose names it bears, affords a strong *prima facie* evidence that the book is true. When we have proved the genuineness of the works of Livy, Cicero, and Tacitus, we do not think of disputing the truth of their histories; we take it for granted, in the common order of things, that Livy, and Cicero, and Tacitus, were men of respectability and truth, (as they certainly were,) and therefore, without any further inquiry, we receive their works as true without the smallest difficulty, (and the same with respect to Xenophon, Thucydides; and all the ancient historians,) and entertain no diffi-

culty on the subject. But there is one ground on which the authenticity or truth of the history contained in the New Testament demands a more close and precise investigation ; namely, —so many parts of that history are miraculous ; and therefore an inquirer into truth (such as I suppose on the present occasion) might fairly demand an extraordinary amount of evidence to prove the authenticity of the New Testament.

Now, with that extraordinary amount of evidence we are perfectly prepared to furnish him ; and I would just say, that this is ground which has been travelled over by the profoundest and most enlightened reasoners that ever lived ; and in a very especial manner by Bacon, Locke, and Newton : and those men, who were not likely to be deceived by a mere shadow and semblance of truth, were all of them entirely satisfied of the truth of the New Testament. In point of fact, there is a great body of evidence on the subject, and no man who goes into it with an impartial mind can fail to arise from the investigation with that mind entirely satisfied of the truth of the gospel history. In the first place, he will observe the confirmation of the truth of that history which is contained in the writings of historians who had no connection with Christians : this is a very interesting line of inquiry. The works of Josephus afford a great deal of evidence of this description. I have just alluded to the history of the Herod family ; how admi-

rably it may be made out by comparing it with the history of Josephus, and so with many other particulars mentioned : the names of the governors, of the high-priests, and so on, are clearly related by Josephus. Among the Roman historians we have evidence of a precise and very interesting character, and especially in the writings of Tacitus. He tells us an extraordinary story ; he was writing the life of Nero, who lived in the year 64 after Christ ; and he tells us that Nero, amidst his mad and wicked actions, set the city of Rome on fire for his amusement, and then, in order to save himself from the reproach and obloquy which this action occasioned, he ascribed the burning of Rome to the poor Christians, of whom he tells us there were large numbers at Rome. I imagine it could not be that many of the Christians were at that time at Rome, unless the history of Christ be true. He goes on, however, to tell us that the Christians derive their name from one Christ, who was put to death by Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea, in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius ; and since that his religion had spread in various parts of the Roman empire : so that the account of the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the precise date when our Saviour lived, the name of the Roman governor by whom he was put to death, the name of the emperor who lived in that time, and the early spread of his religion, are all related by that authentic historian, Tacitus ! There is

a small testimony in the works of Suetonius, and another in Lucian; but I know of no Roman writer who affords a more interesting and delightful light on this subject than Pliny the Younger, who lived in the time of the Emperor Trajan, about the year 100. His letter to Trajan respecting the Christians was written in the year 107: he was governor of the province of Bithynia, in Lesser Asia, a man of letters and good intelligence, and appears to have possessed some feeling too. His letters are distinguished by a peculiar elegance: he was employed by the Emperor Trajan, who was by no means one of the worst of the emperors, in the wretched work of persecuting the Christians; for it appears that this emperor, like some of his predecessors and some of his successors, was set on exterminating the race of Christians. Pliny writes a letter to the emperor, complaining of the difficulty of the task, and begging for further instructions. He says that this depraved superstition, as he is pleased to call it, has spread on every side; that there is no possibility of stopping it; that it was not only to be found in the towns, but even in little villages and country-places; that the temples of the gods were so entirely forsaken that there was found no market for victims, and in fact the whole country was seized, as it were, by the Christian religion: and he tells us further that upon inquiry he could find no fault with the people, for they committed no offence

against the government, and the only plea on which he could satisfy himself that they were worthy of death was this, viz.: they were so exceedingly obstinate, that nothing could induce them to renounce their faith; but, as for their conduct and actions, they were a quiet and innocent people, and were accustomed to meet on a stated day every week before daylight and to worship God together, and to sing hymns to Christ as to God, (these are his words;) and, further, that they would bind themselves, by a solemn obligation, *not* to rebel against the empire; not to pull down the established order of things in a civil point of view; not to rob their neighbours, or to injure any man, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God, describing in his own language several plain Christian virtues, and especially those of temperance and chastity. This is the character he gives them; and then he says they used to meet again for a social meal in the course of the day. This was all he could say of them, and he begged to know whether the emperor would require him to go on with the persecution. Do you not perceive what an amazing deal of evidence is here? You have in the first place a proof of the character, and in the next, a proof of the numbers and prevalence, of Christians; and when you consider that in embracing Christianity they embraced the furnace, the fagot, the sword, the torment, and the stake; when you consider that in em-

bracing Christianity they renounced their families, their homes, their fortune, and their friends; when you consider that in embracing Christianity they gave up all their old habits—the habits of the Jews and Gentiles, inveterate as they were—and adopted a set of habits which were naturally foreign to their minds and education;—I say, when you take all this into view, and look at their numbers and prevalence all over the country, I think we must all agree that this could not possibly have been the case if the history contained in the New Testament had not been a true history. So much for written testimonies; now for the testimony of the apostles themselves.

What a very great charm it gives to a book, and what very great reliance we have on the authenticity of a book, when the history which it contains is written by an eye and ear witness! What a peculiar authenticity attaches, for instance, to Bishop Burnet's History of his Own Times, and Lord Clarendon's history! Probably some of my young friends have read those books. I venture to say it is impossible for any man to read one of those books written by an eye-witness of the scenes they describe, without feeling an innate conviction that what he reads is true. We like to hear things from an eye or an ear witness, especially when they have the reputation of being honest men. Now, Matthew and John are eye-witnesses; and if any one will take the Gospel of Matthew, and

take the Gospel of John, and observe how they are interwoven one with another, and how completely harmonious the history of the two Gospels is when put together, he will find here the testimony of two eye and ear witnesses which will afford the most satisfactory evidence to the human mind. You remember the beginning of John's Epistle; he says, "What we have seen with our eyes, what we have heard with our ears, what our hands have handled of the word of life, these things we declare unto you;" —and, although Mark and Luke in their Gospels do not stand as eye and ear witnesses themselves, Luke was the companion of Paul the apostle, and Mark the favorite companion of Peter; and therefore they had their history from those who were intimately versed in all the scenes which they described; and in the case of Mark, from one of the apostles who was most favoured by our Lord during his life! Take the book of Acts, and there again you have an eye and an ear witness—Luke—describing what he saw in the course of his travels with the Apostle Paul. The next point is to take these four Gospels and observe their harmony: taking more particularly Matthew and John, the two Gospels of two eye-witnesses, you will find a perfect harmony between those two Gospels; and yet there is that apparent diversity about some little matters which proves that they were independent witnesses. Let us suppose we were in a court of justice, and that the

witnesses were brought forward one after another: the first thing a jury would look at would be the independence of the witnesses, and if they find them looking at some little matters in a different point of view, and stating them in a different manner, it would be a most satisfactory circumstance, because such a variety would prove the independence of the witnesses: and just such a variety is to be found in the four Gospels; and if any one would make a point of examining the little circumstances on which they seem to differ from one another, while their substantial agreement could be proved, they would all be found to agree in the main points; though one man sees one angel, and another two, and so on. Here is a plain and unquestionable proof of their independence; and therefore, when you take the four independent writers,—writers proved to be independent by their variety,—and find that they are all in close, substantial harmony, and that they interweave one with another in the most beautiful and natural manner, you have a proof of the truth of their history which no man can shake.

Now, of the kind of coincidence which I mean, I would just give you a specimen. Matthew, in describing the sufferings of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, describes our Lord's words in prayer when he says, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and again, "If this cup may not pass away from me except

I drink it, thy will be done." Turn to John, and you will find no account of this part of the scene; but when the officers of the high-priest are described by John as coming to surprise him in the garden, and when Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, what are the words of Jesus?—"Put thy sword in thy sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Now, do not you perceive how exactly the narrative of John coincides with the account given by Matthew, so that the idea of the cup he was to drink was still dwelling in the mind of our Saviour? and here the truth comes out in all its simplicity and beauty. A vast variety of these instances might easily be mentioned: they are peculiarly striking when we compare the book of Acts with the Epistles of Paul. The book of Acts describes the acts of Paul; the Epistles contain his writings; and I will venture to say that no man can compare the acts of Paul with the Epistles of Paul, deliberately and carefully, without being plainly convinced that the Epistles are genuine, and the Acts true. The coincidences to which I allude are not of a striking nature; not of a marked, conspicuous character: they are oblique; they are incidental; they arise, as it were, by accident. For example, you find in the book of Acts an account of Paul and Barnabas going out together on a journey and falling out by the way. And why did they fall out? Because Barnabas wanted

to take Mark with him, who had deserted them on a former occasion, and Paul did not think it right. We do not know why that happened; but turn to one of the Epistles of Paul, and you will find it stated of Mark, that he was sister's son to Barnabas, so that Mark was Barnabas's own nephew. Here is the truth glimmering out, as it were, and no man can doubt it to be true. You may recollect what he says about Timothy in the Acts, that he was well reported of, that he had a Jewish mother and a Greek father; and a good deal is said about his submission to the Jewish ceremonies. Turn to the epistle to Timothy; there is no direct mention of his having a Greek father and Jewish mother, but the apostle, in an incidental, oblique, truthlike manner, speaks of the unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois. What faith? Faith in the religion of the Old Testament; therefore they were Jews. And further he says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." How came he to know them from a child? Because his mother did her duty and taught him the Scriptures. Here is an oblique coincidence, which nothing can account for but the truth and genuineness of the books. I was once conversing with a very eminent person, the present Lord-Chancellor,* on this subject, (who we must all allow to be a good

* Lord Brougham.

judge of evidence;) and I was very glad to hear him say, in a very large circle of company, that Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* was perfect evidence. Now, that book is a comparison between the book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul; and I was really rejoiced to hear a man who has sometimes, I believe, been accused of doubts on the subject, plainly declare in the face of a large party that it was a book of evidence. Well, if that is perfect evidence, Christianity is true, and there is an end to the whole question; for, if the book of Acts is true, the whole is true, for the miraculous part of the book of Acts is sufficient to prove the divine origin of our holy religion.

I now wish to bring to view certain coincidences between the contents of the New Testament and profane authors, of the same oblique character, and therefore the more indicative of truth, and also of certain circumstances which have lately arisen, which develop the truth of the New Testament. In the 17th chapter of Acts, where Paul visits Athens, he finds altars "to the unknown God,"—a very remarkable circumstance; and then he addresses them in the Areopagus on the plain of Mars, (which was the place where they met for the purposes of justice,) and says, "The God whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Now, there is an ancient Greek author of the name of Philostratus, who describes certain circumstances which happened in the city of Athens

about three hundred years before Christ, I believe. A great plague arose in the city, and the inhabitants were exposed to great difficulties; at last the plague was stayed, and (says the history) Epimenes caused altars to be raised in different parts of Athens in honour of the unknown Deity by whom the plague was stayed. What a beautiful though wondrous coincidence! how satisfactory! Who that was forging a history would think of an enemy's authors? but it is mentioned in the book of Acts, and that with a sort of candour for which nothing but truth can account. But, you may say, this evidence applies in a particular manner to those parts of the history which are not miraculous. Many of them do; there was nothing miraculous about Timothy, nor in those altars; but if you read the New Testament you will find the miraculous parts in every portion of it interwoven so naturally, interwoven so entirely yet clearly, that you cannot sever them; and, taking the groundwork as true, you cannot get rid of the truth of the other part of it. You find the whole goes together, and must go together: in proving the truth of the history, you prove the truth of the miracles as well as all things else. But it so happens that even here is evidence bearing on the specific point, bearing specifically on the miraculous portion, and proving that the miraculous part of the history is true. Celsus, that bitter enemy to Christianity, not only al-

lows in his writings (which Origen quotes from) that the New Testament was written by its supposed authors, but he clearly acknowledges that the miraculous parts really took place. Here is an acknowledged evidence, the evidence of an enemy, of an enemy of comprehensive mind; he acknowledges the miracles were true, and he tries to get out of a scrape by pretending that they were caused by magic. In the same way the Jewish enemies of Christianity bore testimony to the truth of the Christian miracles! I suppose you have all heard of the Talmud,—a very curious book written by Jewish doctors in the second and third centuries, and some part of it earlier; it has two parts, the Mishna, which contains all the Jewish traditions, and the Gemara, which is a commentary; and the whole is a very voluminous work in Talmudic Hebrew, very difficult to read. In this Talmud there is an attack on Christianity, and those Jewish doctors acknowledge that the miracles of Jesus Christ were true miracles; and they get rid of the difficulty, just as their forefathers did, by ascribing them to Beelzebub. This, you know, is a poor method, for a house divided against itself cannot stand; still, there is the evidence of the enemies of Christianity to the truth of the miracles. Then again there is a very curious evidence in the works of Justin Martyr: he wrote a public apology for Christianity, addressed to the Roman emperor, Antoninus Pius; and in this apology—a public

production, addressed to the highest magistrate of the state—he makes his appeal to certain records which were in the hands of the emperor, and were in the archives of Rome, in which were recorded the acts of Pontius Pilate. Now, it was known to be the practice of Roman governors of that day to send home a journal of all the particular events, which have been called the “acts of Pontius Pilate,” or of any other. “Well,” says he, “examine the acts of Pilate,—I know that they are in your hands, I know they are in the archives of the Roman empire,—and there you will find a precise account of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Now, can any man suppose that Justin Martyr, who was a great philosopher and a wise man, would be so foolish as to append the whole weight of his argument on a point which the emperor could have refuted in a moment if it had not been true? There can be no question that those acts actually existed; that they were in the archives of the Roman empire, and did contain an account of our Saviour and his resurrection. So that we have abundant evidence afforded us by the enemies of the truth; and no evidence is better.

But now let us take the evidence of the friends of truth. Not only the four writers of the Gospels, but all the apostles, were witnesses of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and they went forth in every part of the civilized world, and even beyond its limits,

as witnesses, not merely of certain doctrines, but of certain facts on which those doctrines were built. I think we have abundant evidence that these men—these twelve men, taking Matthias instead of Judas—could not by any possibility be deceived about the miracles, in the first place; and then I will show you that they could not be deceivers, and you will judge what the alternative must be. That they could not be deceived you may judge from this circumstance:—that these men were slow of heart to believe the things they did see, remarkable for their incredulity, as they state respecting themselves, acknowledging their own weakness; men very cautious in the reception of facts, which is evident in their history. And, in the next place, what were the facts? They were facts to which they were all witnesses. Could they by any possibility be deceived when, for instance, the leper, covered with a loathsome and incurable disease from head to foot, cast himself prostrate on the ground before Jesus, in presence of his disciples? “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” “I will; be thou clean;” and immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Could any man be deceived in this fact? An eye-witness, a deliberate eye-witness, could not be deceived about that. Was it evidence to be mistaken for a moment, when Lazarus had been lying in his grave four days, beginning to putrefy; when a whole company surrounded the grave; when the apostles were

all about our Saviour, when the grave was opened, when the language was uttered, "Lazarus, come forth," and immediately he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot? Here was a fact in which no eye-witness could possibly be deceived. But take the main fact to which they bear testimony, and look at it for a short time,—the resurrection of our Lord himself. I will venture to say, that there is no fact recorded in ancient history, of which we are in possession of such satisfactory evidence, as the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His death, you know, is not only recorded by the evangelists, but by the Roman historians, as I have mentioned, and also by Josephus, as he has done his resurrection in one passage, which we have every reason to consider genuine. Call to mind the extreme publicity of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; remember the reputation that he had obtained among all the people; remember the mighty multitudes who followed after him into the wilderness; think of the amazing effect which his doctrine, and all the miracles he wrought, must have produced on the minds of the people in general: then remember that he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies; that he was crucified on Mount Calvary; that the circumstance was of the most notorious description. And when did it take place? During the feast of the Passover, when thousands and tens of thousands of Jews from every part of the country were as-

sembled at Jerusalem. And at what time of day? At noonday: for three noonday-hours—from twelve to three—he remained on the cross, two notorious criminals being crucified at the same time. Now, we are all perfectly well aware, even in this country, of the publicity of these scenes, and of the vast multitudes of people thronging to witness them; and we have no doubt that all Jerusalem, as we may say, was poured out to witness the public death of our Lord. No event was ever more public—no event was ever more marked—than the death of Jesus Christ on the cross: and it is a very remarkable circumstance, that there was also a peculiar investigation into this subject as it happened in the order of Providence. You know the day that was to come next was a high Sabbath, and the Jews were anxious that the legs of the criminals, as they called them, should be broken, that their death should be accomplished and their bodies be removed before the coming in of the Sabbath. Pilate sends his soldiers for the purpose, and, when they come and examine Jesus, they brake not his legs: and why? For he was dead already. They came and examined him, and found him dead; and then, with a sort of wanton barbarity, they plunged a spear into his side, and there came thereout blood and water; and therefore we may rest assured, that even if death had not taken place, death must have taken place after the infliction of that addi-

tional wound. So that there is the most precise and marked evidence of the fact. Well, he is committed to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; the seal of the Roman governor is placed on the tomb; the soldiers of the Roman government are posted as watchers; at the appointed hour the seal is broken; the watchers are scattered; the stone is removed; the Lord is risen: the angel in white (or two angels) is found sitting in the sepulchre; Jesus appears first to Mary and converses with her; then to Peter; then to the two disciples, as they were going to Emmaus; that same evening, being the first day of the week, to the ten apostles, (Thomas Didymus not being there;) on the following week to all the apostles, including Didymus; then, as Paul testifies in the 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, to five hundred brethren at once; and all those persons were witnesses of our Lord's resurrection. And he was subjected to close personal examination; that doubter, Thomas—that man who would not believe unless he saw with his own eyes, who would not believe unless he saw the wounds, the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and his wound in his side,—our Saviour showed him his hands; his finger was put into the prints of the nails; his hand was put into the side of our wounded Saviour; he was personally examined: and I will say that, without this examination, with all those facts before them, the apostles could not possibly be deceived as to that fact.

It is morally impossible, even if one man could by any strong delusion of vision have been deceived in so ostensible and obvious a fact as this, that twelve men could by any possibility be deceived.

Whether then we take our Saviour's resurrection, or the principal miracles which he wrought on other occasions; when we consider the character of the apostles in the first place, and the nature of the miracles in the second place, I think that we must all come to this conclusion:—that it is absolutely impossible the disciples could be deceived by them. Now, could they be deceivers?—though they were not deceived themselves, could they deceive others? What proof have we that they could not be deceivers? In the first place, examine the internal evidence of the gospel history; the remarkable candour which they display in telling their own faults, and the humiliating circumstances which they give; how plainly they tell them all: and, in the second place, their doctrine is the subject of truth. There were never persons who bore so high an esteem for truth as the evangelists and apostles: truth was their motto, their joy, their strength; and they tell us that all liars have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone. But, while that is their doctrine, while their master is called the Truth, by way of eminence; while truth is the main pillar of the Christian character, in their view of it, we test their veracity by their conduct:

those men sacrificed their property, their families, their leisure, their privileges, their habits, and finally their lives; for what purpose? That they might bear testimony to those facts they saw. I will say that there is no impossibility in natural philosophy greater than the moral impossibility that twelve men of established character for veracity and for good conduct; that twelve men of such a character, and such a profession, should sacrifice all they held dear in life for the purpose of propagating that which they knew to be false. There are realities in the moral world which are just as certain and just as unquestionable as the realities in the natural world; and it is just as impossible that twelve men should give up their lives for the purpose of bearing testimony to a lie, as it is that a river should alter its course, and run upwards instead of downwards; and therefore I consider it is proved, in the plainest and most unquestionable manner, that these twelve men, in bearing testimony to the miracles and resurrection of Christ, could not be deceived, and also that they could not be deceivers. What is the alternative? There is but one: namely, that the history which they related is true. And now let me advert for a moment to the peculiar testimony of the Apostle Paul. He says, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." When and where was he seen by the Apostle Paul? Do you want one circumstance which establishes

the truth of the Christian religion? You will find that circumstance in the miraculous conversion of the Apostle Paul: it is an argument beautifully developed by the late Lord Lyttleton in a work expressly written on that subject. The Apostle Paul leaves Jerusalem in the character of a fierce persecutor; a bigot in all the bigotry of the Pharisees, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; zealous for the letter of the law; bound hand and foot by the ceremonial and Mosaic institutions; and fierce as the cruel beasts of prey, in pursuing the unoffending Nazarenes even unto death. In the course of his journey he is arrested in a moment by a light and by a voice from heaven:—“Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” “Who art thou, Lord?” he asks, and is answered, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.” There was a divine hand on that man: he did not disobey the heavenly vision; and in the course of one short moment, as it were, this fierce, this bigoted, this relentless persecutor of the unoffending Christians was converted into the humble, obedient, believing servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. There, friends, is a miracle in itself, which abundantly establishes the truth of our religion. But further, this apostle, like the other apostles, was himself endued with a power of working miracles; not in his own name, not in his own strength, but in the name of the Lord Jesus: he went with

them, confirming their doctrine by signs following. Now turn to the Epistle to the Corinthians, and you will discover in that epistle (which we have already found to be genuine, which is a public document addressed to a public body) these words:—"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." If he had written to the Ephesians about the miracles which he had wrought at Corinth, we might suppose that there was no evidence to the Ephesians of his having done so,—that it might be possibly false; but he further goes on and tells the Corinthians about the wonders which they themselves were enabled to perform; for it was a day of miracles: the day which established Christianity in the world was marked by many coincidences with the announcing of the new doctrine. Now, that the Apostle Paul, in a public document addressed to the Corinthians, should make mention of the miracles which he had wrought in their presence, and of the miracles which they were enabled to work themselves, and, supposing for a moment that those things had not taken place, can you conceive a greater folly, can you conceive a circumstance which would more immediately bring upon him the rebuke of being a deceiver, and therefore wholly unworthy of credit? Taking into account that the Apostle Paul was neither a madman nor a fool, we are quite sure that those miracles were really performed, and therefore

we are sure that Christianity is true. Once more let me allude to the marvellous spread of Christianity in every part of the Roman empire; that within twenty years or thirty years of the death of Christ, in the reign of Nero, there were multitudes of Christians at Rome; that by the end of the first century the whole of Lesser Asia was pervaded by them, as it were; churches were planted on every side,—in Phoenicia, Italy, Gaul, and Africa; and in the course of the fourth century, in the year 325, Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire. And when you remember, at the same time, that the religion which was thus disseminated was opposed to all the habits of the Jews and to all the practices of the Gentiles, to all their prejudices, to all their systems, to all their pleasures, and for a long season exposed its advocates to innumerable sufferings, I will say that you cannot possibly account for these facts otherwise than by the truth of the Gospels, and of the miracles and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, with regard to the resurrection, I have one more evidence to produce. There is a silent testimony borne to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by a witness which has gone on bearing its testimony for eighteen hundred years and upwards, and bears it to the present day. What is that? It is the use of the first day of the week, instead of the last, for the Sabbath: trace that to its beginning,

and I defy any man to account for it on any other ground than the fact of its being the day of Christ's resurrection: you may trace it backwards from the eighteenth century, the seventeenth, the sixteenth, and so back to the first century, by the clearest records, till you come to the very time when it first happened; for the disciples were met on that evening, and our Lord then appeared again to them, and they met the same evening next week, and from that time it has gone on to the present day. Why should the Sabbath-day be changed? How can you account for it? What reason was there for it? There is the palpable reason that on that day our Lord rose from the dead: you cannot trace it back any further; you bring it to that point, and there you stop. And I will say that, when you have plainly the evidence of profane historians concerning the death of our Saviour; when you have the evidence of the twelve apostles to his resurrection, and of the five hundred brethren at once, and the Apostle Paul afterwards; and when, in addition to their evidence, which we have found to be so irresistibly true, we have the silent, continuous, and increasing testimony of the first day of the week; I will say that there is no fact that ever was recorded in ancient history, of which we have so strong an evidence as the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, friends, let us just draw a conclusion from the premises before us. Probably most

of you are aware of the nature of inductive philosophy: the philosopher examines the facts which lie before him on the surface of nature, or in the depths of nature; he examines a large number and variety of facts; he analyzes them into their particular parts; he compares them one with another, and, by an inductive process, he traces them to a common principle or common cause; that cause he again traces backwards to another, until he arrives with infallible certainty at the first great cause,—God, the Author of nature. The argument which I have now been using enables me to trace Christianity, by a similar inductive process, to God, the Author of nature. We have a great variety of facts before us: we trace them backwards, and backwards, until we come to the actual miracles of the New Testament; then we examine what those miracles are, and we find they are infractions and interruptions of the uniform sequences of nature, of the most marked and definite description,—not ascribable to any second cause, but actual infractions and interruptions of those sequences of nature which we know to be uniform. Nature is already traced to God; we know that the uniform sequences of natural things are by the order of his wisdom and his power; we know that no man can resist or interrupt the fiat of Supreme authority, and therefore we may rest assured that actual miracles, actual interruptions and contradictions of the uniform order

and sequences of nature, must be traced, like the order itself, to the Author of nature,—that is, to God; and if any man bring forward a doctrine, and accompany that doctrine by actual, undoubted, public, and unquestionable miracles, or infractions of the order of nature, he thereby brings along with him an evidence, which the most scrutinizing philosophy cannot refuse to admit, that his doctrine comes from God. I must, however, make a little reserve in my argument. I think we have some reason to believe that a certain power over the order of nature, within very circumscribed limits, has on certain occasions been permitted (for reasons we cannot understand) to evil spirits, as I think was the case with the magicians of Egypt, who contended with Moses; but, when you examine the Christian miracles, you will find in their magnitude, their variety, their stupendous importance, their beauty, their sublimity, and in their compassionate character, abundant evidence of the origin from which they sprang; and those wonders of the Egyptian magicians will not for a moment bear the smallest consideration in comparison with them. And observe well, that there is this feature in them:—they were all wrought in the support of the cause of holiness. Now, you know that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and if Satan be divided against Satan his house cannot stand; and, within the whole scope of man's argument, nothing has ever been produced more

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absurd than the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which the Jews spake, when they ascribed the miracles of our Lord to the power of Beelzebub. Now, friends, the argument grounded on natural philosophy enables us to trace these infractions of the sequences of nature to God, the Author of nature; and the holiness of that religion in testimony of which those miracles were wrought enables us to trace the same wondrous facts to God, in his character of the moral governor of the world,—who is holy—holy—holy—the Lord God of Sabaoth: and may the whole world be filled with his glory!

SECOND LECTURE.

ON THE
GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

THE genuineness of the books of the Old Testament is established by the same kind of critical evidence as that of the books of the New Testament. My young friends, I presume, are most of them fully aware, that, as the New Testament was written in Greek, so the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. In the first place, I need hardly remind them that in the New Testament itself there is a variety of quotations from the Old Testament. I may say, with very little exception, from every part of the Old Testament; and, if any person would take the trouble of selecting all such quotations from various parts of the Old Testament, contained in the Gospels and Epistles, they would find that they would make an important volume;

and it is worthy of observation, that our Saviour and his apostles always quote from the Old Testament as words of divine authority, so much so as to settle every question connected with morals or religion: they quote it frequently; and they quote it as divine Scripture. Now, we are quite sure that the books of the Old Testament could not be thus quoted by the apostles, and our Saviour, and the Evangelists, had they not existed long before that period, and been generally known as the established Scriptures of the Jews: in fact, our Lord was pointing to the canon of the Old Testament where he speaks of "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; for those three contained the whole of the Old Testament, according to the version that was customary among the Jews. The Law contained the five books of Moses; the Prophets contained, according to the Jewish classification, the whole of the historical books, and all the Prophets, as we now call them; and the Psalms contained, not only the Psalms, but the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, and the books of Job and Esther: so that these three divisions contain the whole; and our Saviour mentions them all as bearing testimony to himself.

But we are not confined merely to the New Testament as an evidence of this point: the works of Josephus, which are very extensive, contain voluminous extracts from the Old Testament. He lived during the apostolic age,

and wrote a large work, called "The Antiquities of the Jews:" this contains what we may call the transference of the history of the Old Testament into his own pages. Besides, you have frequent quotations from Psalms and the Prophets; and not only so, but in one of his works he enumerates the books which form the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, and gives a list of them. Besides Josephus, there was a voluminous and important Jewish writer, who lived in Egypt at the time of our Saviour, whose name was Philo: he was a Platonic philosopher, wrote a great variety of works, and quoted extensively from almost every part of the Old Testament; and it is very remarkable that Philo the Jew, as well as Josephus, always quotes from the Old Testament as divine Scripture. We have, therefore, in the various books of the New Testament, in the writings of Josephus, and in those of Philo, the most abundant evidence, on the ground of quotation, of the genuineness of the Old Testament, and of the antiquity of that part of the sacred volume. But, besides these, we are in possession of a most important document,—namely, a translation which was made of the whole Hebrew Scripture, between two hundred and three hundred years before the Christian era, into the Greek: it was made under the care of the Ptolemies of Egypt, by learned Jews of that date, and it furnishes, therefore, a plain and unquestionable proof of the existence of the

books of the Old Testament before that period: and they were then translated as very ancient, and as divine books.

There is also internal evidence of the language in which the Old Testament was written. You remember that the genuineness of the New Testament was evidenced by the peculiar language in which that was written,—namely, Hebrew-Greek. On the very same principle of criticism, the genuineness of the Old Testament is established by the peculiar nature of the language in which almost the whole of it was written,—namely, pure Hebrew.

The Jews were accustomed to speak the pure Hebrew before they went into Babylon,—before the date of their captivity; but when they returned from Babylon, about five hundred and thirty years before Christ, they lost their old language, and were afterwards accustomed to speak in a language which was Hebrew in its origin, but was mixed with Chaldee, or Syriac-Greek: in short, it was really imbued with the Syriac language, and it was about as similar to the Hebrew as Italian is to Latin. It is very evident, therefore, that the bulk of the Old Testament must have been written while the Jews were accustomed to speak the pure Hebrew: and we are enabled in this way to trace it backwards to a date anterior to six hundred years before the coming of Christ. When the Jews settled in their own land, on their return from captivity, they formed what was called

synagogue-worship, and they used to meet in their synagogues on the Sabbath-day, for the purpose of the public worship of God ; and part of their service consisted in reading extracts from the Law of Moses, and afterwards from the Law and the Prophets together. My young friends will easily remember that this was the case when our Saviour was on earth ; how frequently he went to the synagogues, and how plainly it is recorded that the Law and the Prophets were read on those occasions ; and, in order to make the reading intelligible to the hearers, there was a translation provided from the pure Hebrew into that Syriac or Chaldee language which the people were now speaking. Those translations were called Targums, and the text was first read in the original Hebrew, and afterwards read in the version of the vernacular language, in order that the people might understand the reading. Now, it is a very satisfactory circumstance, and gives additional weight to the evidence of which we were in possession, of the genuineness of the Old Testament, that some of those translations are now in our hands,—a very ancient one of the books of the Law, written by Onkelos, and another of the books of the Prophets, written by Jonathan ; and they are documents of great importance, not only as throwing considerable light on the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, but as affording a clear evidence of the genuineness and antiquity of those Scriptures.

It appears that when the books of the Law were written they were carefully kept, first in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; and, as the various books of history and prophecy were afterwards composed, each in their own age, they were added to the stock which was kept in the archives of the temple ; and this was known to have been the practice of the Jews before their captivity. After their captivity, copies were multiplied in every direction for the use of the various synagogues. I will also mention, that very peculiar care had been taken of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures : and even at the time when the Jews were opposing—were doing all they could to oppose—the spread of our holy religion, there was a set of doctors risen among them, who made a great point of attending to the preservation of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. They counted all the letters of each book, made a careful examination, and, with the greatest possible precision, attended to it in a remarkable manner ; being raised up by Providence, as it were, to guard from alteration even those very passages of their own Scripture which testified against themselves and proved the divine origin of the mission of Christ. And thus again, through the means of its enemies, the truth of our religion is established ; which is therefore true, our enemies themselves being judges.

Now, these remarks on the subject of the Old Testament appear to me to be necessary,

before I introduce another topic of peculiar importance, in connection with the evidence of Christianity, and no less interesting or less diversified than the evidence from miracles, and those historical portions to which I alluded last night: I mean the evidence of prophecy. You may remember, that I endeavoured, when last we met, to show you how Christianity was traced upwards to God, as the Author of nature. Now, in taking a brief view of the subject of prophecy, my object will be to trace Christianity upwards to God, as the Author of providence, and as the supreme Ruler of all events. The existence and wisdom of God are easily demonstrated, as we all know, from the works of nature, and I would endeavour to explain what is the true process of inductive philosophy, which rises step by step; rises from nature up to nature's God: and so, when we reflect on the order of providence, when we call to mind the wondrous dealings of God with his reasonable creatures, when we remember the various providential occurrences in our own experience, we trace all these events upwards to their Author,—that is, God: and I have often thought, that there is clearly no evidence more satisfactory of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Divine Being, than this especial providence, which all his children cannot fail to remark in the course of experience: we often find, that circumstances which appear to be of

a very trivial nature lead to most important consequences.

“ Ah! who shall say how great the plan
Which this day’s incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass’d unnoticed, as the bird
Which cleaves the silent air, unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
The harbinger of endless good.”

Now, I suppose there are but few of us that have not observed occurrences,—little occurrences,—in our own lives and circumstances, which answer to this description; and I am sure no Christian, who has marked the course of his own existence, can fail to rise upwards in his mind from the transition of providence to its supreme and ever-present Author. We come, then, to this point:—that God is the ruler of all events, and that all the events which happen belong to that vast chain of providence which he alone holds in his hand, and with which he alone can possibly be acquainted: the depths of the past, the present, and the future, are all one to him; but the actual knowledge of the future, more especially, is one of those divine attributes with which we have every reason to believe that no creature can possibly interfere, because the future belongs to the hidden counsel of an all-wise and unsearchable Being. It is very true, that sagacious men may often make a very good guess about the

future; it is very true, that some persons are much more long-sighted than others, and often form very plausible and correct notions, as it afterwards turns out, about that which may come at a future day; and it is also true that we are enabled to guess at the future by analogy, and that when, under certain circumstances, we have seen certain things happen, we of course conclude that, under the same circumstances, the same things will happen again; indeed, we cannot possibly get rid of that sense which God has given to us of the uniformity of the sequences of nature. We know the sun rose yesterday; we know it rose to-day; we feel quite sure it will rise to-morrow: therefore, so far we can form a notion of the future. But really to know the future, really to know those events which will be brought forward in the development of that mighty and mysterious chain of providence which God holds in his own hand, is, in the strictest sense of the word, an exclusively divine attribute; and therefore, if a religion comes attested by prophecies of events which were future, and even very distant, at the time when the prophecy is uttered, we have a distinct proof, independently of miracles, which establishes the divine origin of that religion. And it is a very remarkable thing, that Christianity is distinguished from all other religions by this particular mark:—that impostors have not ventured upon attesting their religion by even an attempt at prophecy. Mahomet,

for instance, was too wise to attempt prophecy: he knew that, within the scope of a little time, the facts that would happen would contradict his assertions, and overturn his religion at the foundation. But there is nothing by which Christianity is more marked and distinguished, there is nothing that more strikingly pervades the whole of the Holy Scriptures, than a line of prophecy; and I think, the more we examine it, and the more we compare it with historical events recorded by authentic historians and known to ourselves, the more we shall be persuaded, and fully convinced, that all scriptures were given by inspiration of God. Now, there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled in order to establish the divine origin of a prophecy. In the first place, we must be in possession of evidence that the prophecy was really delivered before the event took place; that is the first condition. The second condition is this:—that the event to which the prophecy relates should be of a nature so entirely beyond the scope of the mere sagacious conjecture of man, and so complex in its nature, as to be beyond the reach of human sagacity, and only to be accounted for by divine inspiration. The third condition is, that the prophecy shall be known to have been accurately fulfilled, in its several parts, on the testimony of authentic history.

Now, if I fulfil these three conditions, and can make them out clearly, I establish the rea-

soning as it relates to prophecy. And I will now take a few specimens from the Old and New Testament prophecies, in order to point out in what a remarkable manner these conditions are fulfilled by the prophecies contained in the Holy Scriptures. The first condition I have already alluded to; and I consider that no more need be said, to prove that both the Old and New Testaments were genuine productions, and written by the authors whose names they bear, and in the age in which they profess to have been written. And, as the prophecies which are contained in Scripture relate to events which were future at that time, I consider the first condition clear. The ground is clear, so far as it relates to that: then let us look at the events which were the subject of prophecy. I am aware that they are very numerous, for the prophecies contained in the Old Testament relate to a very great variety of nations and a great variety of events; and it is almost difficult, in the multitude of those prophecies, all of which answer my two other conditions, to select one in preference to another. In the first place, I wish to advert to the prophecy which our Lord Jesus Christ delivered on the subject of Jerusalem, when his disciples came to inquire when those things should be of which he was speaking; for they were pointing out the magnificent edifice of the temple, and Jesus Christ said that the time should come when not one stone should be left on another; and when

they inquired when those things should be, and what should be the sign of his coming at the end of the world, you will find that he goes into a description of various circumstances, as it relates to that part of the question when these things should be,—that is, when the temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed. And he says that that generation should not pass away before all those things had happened. In speaking of the day of his coming to judgment, he says, Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels of God; but with regard to the first points he gives most striking and definite information; in the first place, that there shall be a general persecution of Christianity; and, in the next, that there shall be wars, and rumours of wars, in various parts of the world; and he mentions, in the third place, that there shall be signs in heaven, and earthquakes in divers places; he mentions that false Christs should arise and deceive many; and then he declares that Jerusalem shall be encompassed with armies, and that there should be such a time of distress experienced as had never been before known on earth; he describes the entire destruction of Jerusalem, and, as I before said, that not one stone of the temple should be left upon another; and not only in one passage are these descriptions given, but the prophecy is repeated again and again.

For the accomplishment of these things, we turn to the authentic history of Josephus, and

of some of the Roman historians, and there we find that false Christs arose at that time, in several places, and deceived many. Persons who professed to be Christ arose, and many went after them. We have authentic history that the Christians were exposed, during that period, to the most dreadful persecution; we find that there were commotions and wars arising among many nations in various parts of the Roman empire; and what Josephus particularly mentions, and also Tacitus and other Roman historians, the signs were seen in heaven, probably astronomical signs, and many that may be traced to electricity; there were signs, extraordinary darkness, and occurrences of that description, besides earthquakes in various places. And in the year 70, Titus, son of Vespasian, the Roman emperor, and afterwards emperor himself, at the head of a vast army, invaded Judea. Jerusalem is encompassed with armies; the Roman eagle is found standing in the holy places; and, from the history of Josephus, the sufferings of the Jewish people during that period exceeded any thing that is known from the records of history to have taken place on any other occasion. Multitudes of Jews had entered into the city before Jerusalem was besieged, in consequence of its being the time of one of the public festivals,—the Feast of Tabernacles: the city was therefore crowded with inhabitants at the time. They were torn by intestine factions of the

most violent kind, and were reduced to dreadful distress in the course of that long siege. It is recorded, that no less than one million one hundred thousand persons perished in that event, so completely fulfilling our Lord's words, that the distress experienced on that occasion should far exceed any thing that was known in the history of man. But here there is an affecting circumstance to allude to, which throws a peculiar light on the subject, as it relates to prophecy. We must, however, go back to a far more ancient date than the words of our Saviour on the subject: we go back to the book of Deuteronomy, and you will find in one of the latter chapters of that book the curses which are pronounced against the Jews in case of their disobedience; and, among other curses, it is declared that so great shall be the distress and straitness in which they shall be placed, when besieged by their enemies in their walls, that even the delicate woman—the woman who was so delicate as not to put her foot upon the ground—should be found supporting life by the flesh of her own children. What a most remarkable prophecy! how entirely past all the reach of human conjecture! And yet we have a definite account of the fulfilment of that prophecy on three separate occasions. The one was when Benhadad, king of Syria, was besieging Damascus; you remember the story of the two women: the children of one had been devoured one day, and the other woman with-

held the other the next day. When Nebuchadnezzar afterwards besieged the city, Jeremiah, in the Lamentations, says, that the pitiful women had sodden their own children. And finally, when Jerusalem was encompassed by the armies of Titus, when it was torn with intestine factions, when the straitness that was suffered during that siego was carried to the greatest extremity, a similar event happened, which is related in the most express terms by Josephus: that some of those brutal savages who headed those factions, and were going from house to house to spoil, to rob, and to slaughter, came to the house of a delicate lady,—a lady so delicate, that we may suppose, according to the description, she would not set her foot upon the ground; and yet they found her in the act of devouring her own child. It was Mary, the daughter of Eleazer: the name is given, as well as all the particulars of the circumstance, and her character as a lady.

Here we find, in the works of Josephus, an authentic historian of the first century, a plain evidence of the literal fulfilment of a most definite, a most marked, and a most surprising prophecy, which was delivered about fifteen hundred years before the Christian era. We have then a complete fulfilment of my second condition; the whole circumstances of the siege of Jerusalem, the distress which was then experienced, and the whole of those events which accompanied the siege, together with the scat-

tering of the Jews afterwards among all nations, which was also mentioned. All these things are plainly recorded in prophecy, and all entirely past the common reach of human sagacity. There was no reason in the world to expect any such thing; and to crown all, to give every effect to the prophecy, we find this peculiar circumstance, to which we have adverted, mentioned by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, and every circumstance also clearly fulfilled in history. These clearly are events far beyond the reach of human conjecture,—complex, extraordinary, past all conjecture in their nature, and therefore fulfilling my second condition; and the third condition, the fulfilment of them, recorded in an unquestionably authentic history, and altogether independent of the prophecy! We have therefore in these prophecies respecting Jerusalem, and in their fulfilment, a most clear and unquestionable evidence of the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures, as well as of the divine origin of the religion of which these prophecies were a mark or witness!

There is another part of this subject, with respect to Jerusalem, on which perhaps a few sentences may be spoken to a good purpose. There arose in the fourth century of the Christian era a violent enemy against Christianity: I mean the Emperor Julian, who was a person of remarkable character and very considerable information. Well acquainted with these pro-

phecies, he was yet determined by his power and his might to afford a practical refutation of them. He therefore determined that the temple should no longer continue in a state of desolation; that the Jews should be brought back to their native city; that Jerusalem should again arise in its native splendour; and he confided the task of rebuilding the temple to his favourite Alypius. He placed large treasures in his hands; put an army at his disposal, the soldiers of which were to become workmen on that occasion. He said, "Go and build the temple of Jerusalem: I will refute the prophecies; I will show that the temple shall be built, and stand, and the Jews shall still continue their own worship, in spite of these Christians whom I abhor." Alypius repairs to Jerusalem with his men and treasures, and immediately begins the work with every possible outward advantage which circumstances could afford, obtained by the power and treasures of the emperor: and what is the result? No sooner was the work begun on Mount Moriah, than balls of fire issued from the mountain and entirely prevented the progress of the work. Again and again the attempt was made: life after life was lost in the service; and at last Alypius, with all his army and treasures, was obliged to abandon the undertaking, and freely confess to the emperor that it was impossible: and the work was given up. Now, of this fact we are in possession of

a most undoubted historical evidence; and I do not know that my young friends can have a better or more agreeable exercise of their understanding than in reading Bishop Wayland's book, entitled "Jerusalem," in which the whole of these facts are spoken of; and they are also declared by several Roman, Hebrew, and Christian writers: and even Gibbon allows that they were respectable and proper witnesses. But we have another witness of the fact, and the testimony of another enemy to Christianity. Ammianus Marcellinus, an eminent Roman historian, who lived at the time, who was the personal friend of Alypius and Julian, and was cognizant of all the facts of the case, has left them on record in the books of his history: the fact is, they are as undoubted as any fact can be in history, and thus it appears that, by an act of divine providence, it is unnecessary for us to settle whether it was directly miraculous or not: whether it could be accounted for by the instrumentality of any philosophical cause, or whether it was (as I believe it was) directly miraculous, it is not our present duty to inquire; one thing is certain, that such was the event of the case, that the prophecy remained to be fulfilled without interruption, for Jerusalem was left in the predetermined desolation, and the Jews were continued in their scattered and desolate condition, which, according to the prophecy, must continue until the terms of the gospel are fulfilled.

Turn your views to the Jews themselves: can any thing be more precise than the prophecy contained in the same chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, one of the latter chapters and other parts of the books of Moses, respecting the sufferings which were to come on the Jews in case of disobedience? They were to be scattered among all the nations of the earth; they were to be a proverb, a byword, trodden under foot, persecuted; how they were to be robbed, spoiled, and pillaged; and we know that we have before us, in the most striking manner, the fulfilment of these prophecies, and yet "not a grain of them was to fall to the earth;" that is to say, although they were to be mingled among all nations, they were still to maintain their national character, and still to be known as a peculiar people. It is very remarkable, that their character is in various respects developed; their love of money is particularly mentioned, and their gold is mentioned by Ezekiel, that it should be to them the stumbling-block of iniquity; besides various other points respecting them. Now, all those were past human conjecture; they were entirely beyond the reach of human sagacity; and yet we know, we have it before us, that these things are completely fulfilled, and no man can compare what he knows of the character of the Jewish people of this time, with the words of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, without perceiving a plain proof that Scripture is given

by inspiration of God, and that our religion, being testified of and borne witness to by those prophecies, bears upon it the plainest marks of its divine origin.

I will advert to one or two more circumstances of this kind. I suppose among all the cities of antiquity there was none more remarkably wicked, no city more loaded with riches, none more teeming with prosperity, than the city of Tyre. It was the commercial emporium of the ancient world, and remarkable for the luxury, and pride, and wealth of its inhabitants. Ezekiel comes forward, and says that it shall be utterly destroyed; that the very ruins of Tyre—that her very dust—shall be scraped away; yes, *scraped away!* (what an extraordinary expression!) that she should be left as the top of a rock, and that the fishermen should spread their nets there. Was any thing in the world more improbable, more past the reach of human conjecture? Was any prophecy that was ever professed to be delivered more entirely beyond the scope of man's sagacity? Certainly none; nothing in the world could be more striking, or more peculiar, or unexpected, or unlikely: and yet this prophecy has received the most literal accomplishment; this ancient city of Tyre was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar and his army, and was destroyed; and then Tyre arises again on a little island close by the sea-coast, or in it indeed, and becomes richer, and prouder, and more glorious,

than ever. Alexander the Great comes and invades Asia, and makes an attack upon Tyre, this commercial emporium of the ancient world; and, in order to obtain possession of the new city of Tyre, what does he do? Why, he scrapes the dust of the ruins of old Tyre literally away, and forms a mound with this ruin, the dust of those ruins, with which he passes across the strait, and by that means obtains access to the new city; so that that prophecy is literally accomplished, that "the dust is scraped away from her." Alexander certainly had no intention of fulfilling the prophecy; the last thing that could have entered into his mind was to afford a proof of the Christian religion; but he has done so, and he actually scraped the dust of the city, of ancient Tyre, and formed a mound with it, and by that means obtained access to the new city, broke in on the city, and destroyed it. And now both the old and the new cities are found to be exactly what is described: they are like the top of a bare rock, a small fisherman's cabin in one of the two. Here again we have the testimony of an enemy: a Frenchman travels into the East, (a notorious infidel,) and comes to Tyre; and what does he see? Why, he tells us (little thinking that he is affording us a proof of Christianity) that the first thing that meets his eye is the fisherman spreading his net on the rock: he records it in his works, and an English traveller of the name of Maundrell also sees the fact: and here is a

literal fulfilment of the prophecy. Now you see how entirely the conditions are all fulfilled. How, first, a proof that the prophecy was delivered long before the event happened: secondly, the nature, the surprising and peculiar nature, of the event, beyond all human sagacity; and thirdly, the testimony of authentic profane historians and modern travellers, an infidel, an enemy, as to the very facts which were the subject of the prophecy. Here then we have a delightful evidence, a most satisfactory evidence, of the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures and of our holy religion.

This just reminds me of a fact, which I will mention by the way, though it does not exactly fall in with this part of my subject,—how curiously the truth of Scripture has been developed by many modern travellers; and I will give you an instance, which strikes my memory at this moment. You know the town of Philippi: when Paul came to Philippi, the Philippians, you will find, in the 16th chapter, I think, of the Acts, called themselves Romans. And how came they to be Romans? Here is a question which naturally puzzles the commentator. The answer is, undoubtedly, they were a colony of Rome; for the Romans were in the habit of settling colonies in different parts of the world, and they had the privileges of Roman citizenship, and they must have been colonists; but there is no account of that in history, and we were obliged to take it for granted, till

lately. A modern traveller goes into that spot and scrapes up a coin, and on this coin he found this inscription, "Philippii Colonia;" and here the whole thing is explained: and so, at the end of eighteen centuries, up springs a little coin from the ground which throws a beautiful light on the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the plainest confirmation of the truth of that history. Now, this is the very nature of truth, which springs up in all directions, and in all ages: and you will find that it has become more and more confirmed as time rolls on, and there is nothing on the other side:—there is the great strength of our argument.

Well, now, Babylon. What a wonderful place was Babylon, more than thirty miles in circumference, with a wall of immense thickness or breadth, so that the chariots were driven abreast on the top of the wall, inhabited by a vast population, the king called the king of kings, because all the surrounding nations were tributary to him! and I suppose we can form no idea of the importance of the city, or of its vast power and strength. But this makes no difference to a man like Isaiah, who, in the spirit of the Lord, prophesies that it should be utterly destroyed; that her two-leaved gates should be opened; that the stream of her river should be turned aside; her watercourse turned aside; and that Cyrus (calling him by name) should open the two-leaved gates: all of which exactly happened in the term of years.

Cyrus turned the course of the river; he opened the two-leaved gates, and obtained possession of the city: further than that, the city was to be entirely destroyed, and the time was to come when not a remnant was to be left,—only a heap of ruins,—and even the shepherds should not lodge there: it should be a place for the habitations of wild beasts of the forest. So entirely desolate should that vast, proud, wondrous capital become, that it should be no longer the habitation of men, but for the wild beasts of the forest! We have it recorded in the fourth century, (it is a curious circumstance,) that the ground on or near the site on which Babylon used to stand was converted by the Persians into a park for wild beasts. They thought nothing of accomplishing the prophecy; they cared nothing about the Scripture; the last thing they thought of was to afford a proof of our religion. But they did so; and a man was travelling in that neighbourhood not long ago, and he found the city of ancient Babylon in a state of entire desolation, scarcely a trace of the ancient city, only a few heaps of desolate ruins among the desert waste. And what does he see there? Why, one of the first objects that meets his view at a distance is that of a lordly lion stalking about, a perfect accomplishment of the prophecy. What man could see that lion, hear of that lion, or read of that lion, without perceiving in that peculiar event a marked accomplishment of ancient prophecy?

Then Edom. What can be more curious than the accomplishment of the prophecies about Edom? It lay between Judea and Egypt, and was the country which we now call Arabia Petrea. Edom was once a country of great importance. "Oh, thou who dwellest in the cleft of the rock," (this is the language of the prophet Obadiah,) "though thou buildest thy nest with the eagle, the Lord shall bring thee to the ground." They are described in the Holy Scriptures as a most powerful and numerous people, and their cities as being built on the tops of rocks and places of immense natural strength; and then the prophet goes on to declare that Edom shall be utterly laid waste,—so entirely, that no traveller should be able to pass through her. And, behold, the whole of it is accomplished. I suppose it is considered nearly an impossibility for any traveller now to pass through the land of Edom, so perfect is the waste, so entire the desolation, and so extreme is the danger. But there were two gentlemen, with whom I have some little acquaintance personally, who lately determined to see what they could do in penetrating into the land of Edom: they are two naval officers, (Captains Keeling and Mangles;) and they actually found their way to the old city of Edom; and there they found immense ruins of buildings in the rocks, and a great number of sepulchres hewn out of the rocks, and all the ruins of an ancient city of prodigious strength, ex-

actly answering the old description, and now so desolate that no traveller can pass through that country.

Who does not perceive here that all the conditions are accomplished? You have a proof of the antiquity of the prophecies: the events to which the prophecies relate are past all human sagacity; and as for the fulfilment, you have it from the mouths of most respectable men now living: so that in the nineteenth century we are furnished with unquestionable evidence that those who uttered those prophecies spoke by inspiration of God, and that the religion to which they bear testimony is indeed the religion of God himself. Who else can know the future?

There is one point in this subject which I dare not omit, it is so peculiarly important and interesting. The whole of the Old Testament is distinguished by a line of prophecy relating to those events of which the New Testament contains the historical account; and there is as great and as beautiful a correspondence between the Old and New Testaments, as there is between the lungs of the human body and the air which we breathe. No man can meditate on the formation and structure of the human lungs on the one hand, and the formation and composition of the atmosphere on the other, without perceiving that they are fitted one to the other by a designing hand of perfect wisdom: if the lungs had been differently constructed,

we could not inhale the air; if the air had been differently composed, to inhale it would have been death instead of life. Who does not perceive the matchless hand of divine wisdom and design in this agreement? Did the lungs manufacture the air? Has the air any tendency to produce the lungs? The very thought is foolish in the extreme: but a master-hand has prepared them both, and fitted them one to another, and no man can efface the effect which has resulted from that design.

And so you will find, friends, on the comparison of the Old and New Testaments, that they are adapted to each other so as to make up a perfect union and accordant whole. You have in the Old Testament a most marvellous line of prophecy respecting an individual; you have in the New Testament an authentic history of that individual, fulfilling the whole of that chain of prophecy. Allow me to mention a few circumstances connected with this subject. To go through the whole of the prophecies relating to our Saviour would be quite beyond the limits of our time. But a little sketch of the subject:—

In the first place, in the 3d of Genesis, the first promise that is made, and the curse pronounced upon the serpent, is, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head: that was a general description, which is developed in all its parts as we proceed. Christ, the seed of the woman, was to obtain an eternal

ascendency over sin, and therefore was to be truly man.

You go on a little further in the book of Genesis, till you come to Abraham:—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" therefore this deliverer, this Saviour, was not only to be of the human race, but of the seed of Abraham. You go on to the 49th of Genesis:—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come, the peace-giver and sent of God." He was to come, therefore, of the tribe of Judah: here is a further illumination. You then go forward to the book of Jeremiah:—"After those days, saith the Lord, I will raise up unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and execute justice and judgment in the earth :" here is a further illumination. He was to be of the family of David, or, according to the words, "A branch out of the stem of Jesse, out of the root of Jesse, the father of David." Here, then, you have his humanity, his nation, his tribe, his family: and in the 5th chapter of Micah you have his birthplace:—"And thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that shall rule in Israel :" there is his birthplace. Then you have the precise date of his coming: seventy weeks are appointed from the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince; to put an end to transgression, to make recon-

ciliation for iniquity, and so on. The date of the decree which was issued by Artaxerxes for the rebuilding of Jerusalem we know from history; and, according to the common Jewish enumeration, four hundred and ninety years brings us exactly (as far as I can now calculate) to the time of the death of our Saviour.

We have, therefore, the exact time when he was to come : then we have his character ; righteousness was to be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins, and with equity was he to judge all nations. His holiness is described in the clearest manner in the 11th chapter of Isaiah. Then we have his sufferings : is there any thing in the world more striking and more important than the prophecy contained in the 53d chapter of Isaiah ? . I will say a little more on that point soon ; but there is a very complete account of his whole stay in the world, his being rejected by the Jews, led as a lamb to the slaughter, and of his being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Again, we have his resurrection in the very same chapter :—" When thou hast made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days :"—prolong his days : there is his resurrection. Again, in the 16th Psalm :—" Thou wouldest not leave my soul in hell, [or in the grave, as it may be read ;] neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption :" then we have many prophecies of his reign and government, of which there shall

be no end. You will perceive that these prophecies are poured in upon us in different ages, through the instrumentality of different prophets. One man contributes one thing to the stock of information, another man another thing to the same stock: there are various rays of light pouring in on this subject at various times from different quarters, and all meeting in a single focus. But more especially there are points in these prophecies of a most marked and peculiar character; indeed, to the very last, when the humanity of Christ and his divine descent are so particularly mentioned, there is an express mention of his divinity:—“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.” “His name shall be called Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness;” (in the 23d chapter of Jeremiah, the one I before quoted.) But you now perceive, from the short account I have given, how very remarkable all those prophecies respecting our Saviour are: first, their great complexity, and the information which they unfold,—such as the tribe of his virgin mother, and even the lesser particulars of the case; in his thirst “they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, parted his garments among them, and cast lots for his vesture,” (in the 22d Psalm,) —even the smallest particulars. Here is light

pouring in upon us from various quarters, and all the particulars of the case; and the whole account is of the most surprising nature, far beyond the reach of human conjecture. These prophecies are scattered over the sacred volume; we have to pick them out; they come one by one,—incidentally, as it were,—and often mingled with other things. Further, you will observe that many of them are enigmatical in their nature: they could not be understood by the persons who delivered them or heard them, unless they were inspired to understand that which they were inspired to deliver; for example, the point I just now mentioned about prolonging his days:—“When thou hast made his soul an offering for sin, [when, that is, when they put him to death,] he shall prolong his days.” Here was an enigma; no one could understand that at the time, unless they were inspired to understand it. And you will find in the end of the 52d chapter of Isaiah a prophecy that may truly be called enigmatical; it is entirely impossible that any man at the time it was delivered should understand its bearing, unless it was by inspiration. At the end of the 52d chapter of Isaiah you will find, “His form was marred more than any man’s, his countenance and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he sprinkle many nations.” What can be the meaning of it? It was all in obscurity at the time it was delivered. When you come to the New Testament, the enigma is solved,

the difficulty is removed, a blaze of light is poured on the subject, every particular is fulfilled. For instance, our blessed Saviour's visage was more marred than any man's with sorrows and afflictions; his crown, his thorns, more than any man's; his form pierced by the nails, pierced by the spear, more marred than any man's: and so shall he sprinkle many nations. We turn to the apostles, and we find that the blood of Christ must be sprinkled on all our hearts by faith, and that by his meritorious death he has procured for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which he sprinkles all nations; therefore the whole difficulty is removed, and in the New Testament you find every difficulty gone. His incarnation, his divine character, his miraculous birth, the date at which he was to be born, his humility, his low estate, his sufferings, his righteous character, his violent death, his resurrection, his prolonging his days, and his glorious reign,—the whole comes before us with a flood of light, and no man can for a moment doubt that here there is the full accomplishment of the prophecies!

I wish to impress on the minds of my young friends, that such is the nature of these prophecies respecting our Saviour, that they had no tendency whatever to accomplish themselves, from their enigmatical nature, for it was only by the events that the prophecies were explained; and the persons who accomplished the prophecies were persons who were enemies to

the truth, in a great variety of instances. For instance, the Roman soldiers little thought that they were accomplishing the prophecy of Scripture when they cast lots for the garments of our Lord; the enemies of truth little thought that they were accomplishing any prophecy of Scripture when they wagged their heads at our Lord on the cross, and when they gave him gall and vinegar to drink. And they show that the prophecies were accomplished by things not of man's procuring, but which arise by the order of providence, in a great variety of instances through the instrumentality of the enemies of Jesus, and yet the accomplishment is perfect, and the enigma is fully solved. You can illustrate it by the subject of hieroglyphics: you go to Egypt and you find a place covered with hieroglyphics, and no man can understand it; it has been a literary curiosity for many ages; but a Dr. Young arises, and a Champollion, and they discover a key to these hieroglyphics, and in a moment the whole is as clear and as easy to read as any newspaper. Thus, when you come to the New Testament, you find in it those facts which furnish a key to explain the most difficult prophecies, and all is light: we find ourselves in the midst of a moral demonstration, of the most perfect character, of the divine origin both of the Old and New Testaments.

These prophecies respecting our Saviour are of peculiar importance, because they were uttered doubtless for the very purpose of afford-

ing us an evidence of the truth of that religion which the Scriptures introduce to our view; they are a seal which never can be broken; they are a testimony which never can be removed into a corner; and they afford a sufficient answer to all the cavils, doubts, and arguments of all unbelievers. I think I have said enough for the purpose of proving that as on the one hand Christianity is traced, through the intervention of miracles, to God, as the Author of nature, so on the other hand Christianity is traced, through the intervention of the prophecies, to God, as the Author of providence.

I wish to occupy a little time with a very brief sketch of another part of the same subject which I hinted at last evening. Christianity is traced to God, as the moral Governor of the world. That the evidences of Christianity are so communicated to us is a subject of wonderful variety, scope, and depth: it may be said there is no end to the subject. I will venture to say that discourses might be delivered upon it, evening after evening, with scarcely a perception of exhausting the subject; but we must apply just a few; and although the arguments of miracles and prophecies are quite sufficient in themselves to prove our points, and wholly incapable of refutation, I consider that the strongest point of all is the internal evidence by which we trace our holy religion, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,

to the moral Governor of the world. Let any man take the pains of collecting from the works of the ancient heathen philosophers, the wisest and most learned, all the information which they can give us on the subject of the Supreme Being:—a good deal might be collected from them on the subject; they were visited by some rays of light; they probably had some lingering, transient notion of God; some of them might possibly learn something from the Jews: but beyond all this there is no evidence, in my mind. I think it may be abundantly proved, that a certain measure of divine illumination is bestowed on all the children of men, whatever may be their condition as to outward ignorance, and that the ancient heathen philosophers, for example, were not left without some feeble rays of light from heaven; and I am bold to confess my opinion that there are many passages in their works which can be accounted for only by that principle. But still, friends, I am prepared to mark the distinction between the early daylight and the blaze of noon; and when I compare the theologies of Plato, of Aristotle, and even of Socrates and Cicero, with the theology of Isaiah and David and Jeremiah, and the other prophets, and Solomon and Moses more particularly, it is indeed like the comparison of the faint twilight with the blaze of noon. It is in the Scriptures, and in the Scriptures only, that we find the attributes of God developed in all their splendour, and in all their beauty and in

all their strength ; and were I to point out one particular evidence, which I consider would establish the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments, I should say, look at the account which those volumes contain of God himself. It is needless to mention to you the almost innumerable passages which relate to the subject ; but you know, friends, that we find in the Scriptures, that God is eternal,—from everlasting to everlasting,—who was, and is, and is to come. You find, also, that God is a Spirit, invisible, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. You will find nothing like that in any of the heathen philosophers. You will find, again, that God is omnipotent ; that he made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them ; that in the beginning he created the heaven and the earth ; that he made all things out of nothing. Now, this is an idea which you cannot trace in the heathen philosophers,—his making all things out of nothing ; though some fully acknowledge him as a Creator, in one sense of the word. You find in the Holy Scriptures that he is omnipresent. What a magnificent idea ! what a glorious and sublime conception ! “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there also.” These are the natural attributes of God, as they are called ; and then his perfect wisdom :—“ He stretched out the heavens by his discretion, and wisdom

was with him when he laid the foundation of the earth." His providence is another attribute frequently mentioned. And then his moral attributes,—his justice, his holiness ; how often do the Scriptures set forth the holiness of God,—"Of purer eyes than to behold evil ;"—his perfect justice, his equity, his moral government. I mentioned his goodness ; and, above all, what I think Bishop Horne, in his work on the Psalms, ventures to call his darling attribute,—the attribute of mercy. I should like to inquire of my young friends who are accustomed to the Greek literature, where can they find any thing, within the whole compass of ancient literature, worthy of the comparison with these three words :—"God is love"? My opinion is, that these three words contain a distinct and unanswerable evidence of the divine origin of Scripture :—"God is love."

You are to remember that many of the ancient Greek and Latin philosophers were persons of great learning ; of deep and comprehensive powers of mind ; of the highest degree of mental acquirements ; educated to the highest point to which man could be, at that time : and you are also to remember that many of the writers of the Old and New Testaments were illiterate men, and very badly educated ; and that there was little science among the Jews ; that they were in various respects rather a rigid and independent people : and yet you find these well-educated and learned philosophers coming

forward with that degree of information on the subject which may be compared to twilight, and you find these illiterate persons coming forward with that blaze of illumination which can only be compared to the noonday sun. What can account for the difference? Is there any man who dares to say that it can be accounted for on any other principle whatever but the divine origin of the Scriptures, and the character of which those Scriptures testify? Take the moral law, which you may trace to the same unenlightened age, as I shall have an opportunity of explaining on a future evening. But when you compare the moral system of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, with the moral system of the Bible, there is the same difference to be seen,—a most wonderful difference in the degree of light. One of the marks of inspiration is, the concentrating of a good deal of important truth in a very short compass. And what do you think comprises those ancient laws,—the whole laws? Why, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy might; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:” here is the fulfilling of the law. How unspeakably superior is the moral law, as it is developed in this short sentence, to all the speeches of the great body of heathen philosophers! and what a plain evidence we have, in these very words, that ours is the religion which flows from the fathomless fountain of infinite wisdom and love.

Let any man take our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and I will venture to say, that, if he is a man of any moral feeling, of any moral discernment, of any nice taste, on the subject of virtue, he has, in that Sermon on the Mount, a most definite, internal proof of the divine authority of our religion. Let us point out one or two instances. Take the first beatitude:—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now, this is a point which distinguishes the moral system of the Bible. The whole moral system of the Bible may be said to be founded, as it were, on humility; from humility may be said to spring other virtues in abundance; humility, contrition, brokenness, poverty of spirit, are absolutely essential to a Christian character: but when you come to open the pages of the ancient philosophers—the inspired philosophers of Greece—we find that there is much, very much, to flatter the pride of man, and to nurse him in the notion of his own original virtue. Poverty of spirit would, by many of the ancient writers, have been considered a shame and a folly, and unworthy of the very character of a man; and yet I should like to know whether there is any one moral quality which works so well in practice, and so upholds the welfare of man, in the power of God, as humility and brokenness of spirit? And here we have a distinguishing point, of the highest moral importance, embosomed in the code of Christianity; distinguishing

it from all the other codes, and affording an evidence in itself of its divine origin. Then, again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Here is another point, in which our Saviour traces the virtue of man to that spring from which it must come; that is, the heart made pure. He tells us, that man's heart naturally brings forth the works of evil until it is made pure by the power of the Holy Spirit,—renewed by God under the influence of that Spirit; that the spring and origin of all morals is the purity of heart,—a most distinguishing feature. For you will generally find that whatever was written on morals by uninspired persons is external, only the surface of things; it does not go down into the depths of human motives. But more especially the moral system of the Bible is distinguished by this circumstance:—that it always brings forward love to God as the very foundation of the whole. And here there is a marked distinction from all the other moral systems which have ever been invented. We are taught by our Saviour—we are taught by his apostles—that the first principle of morals, is to love God with all our hearts and with all our souls; and from this principle all that is virtuous and excellent (either for the glory of God or the welfare of man) is found to spring. And if we take these points into view, and contrast them with whatever has been produced in any age by moral, uninspired persons, the contrast affords a most

abundant evidence of the divine origin of Scripture. It is also to be remembered that, whatever you find in modern writers of correct theology or true morals, we find in its original form in the Holy Scriptures; and, though you may find some sayings on this subject in the writings of unbelievers, they are borrowed, all of them borrowed, from the sacred pages.

I point, therefore, to the broad features of the attributes of God, unfolded in the Scriptures, and to the broad features of the moral law, as distinguished from the uninspired systems of morality, as affording a most unquestionable proof that our holy religion, which is traced, through the intervention of miracles, to God, as the Author of nature, and, through the intervention of prophecy, to God, as the Author of providence, must also be traced, through the intervention of its own internal, moral, and spiritual character, to God, as the moral Governor of the world,—as he who is holy, great, and true. But before I leave this part of the subject I must just advert to a point which throws additional light on it, and may be said to crown the whole:—that the moral law of the Holy Scriptures was embodied in the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And I know not that I could point the attention of young persons to a subject more full of interest, or more replete with unanswerable evidence, as it relates to the divine origin of our holy religion, than the recorded example, in the life and conversa-

tion, of our Lord Jesus Christ, put together by four historians, and sustained with a precision, with a simplicity, with a beauty, with a completeness, with a harmony, for which nothing but truth can possibly account. Oh, it is indeed a wonderful subject of contemplation! Think of the perfect purity of Jesus Christ; without blemish and without spot; holy, harmless, undefiled in spirit. Think of his undoubted integrity; that he is the truth, the very truth, and we always find him the noble magnanimous reprobator of all iniquity; fearless of all the terrors of man's judgment, fearless of all the sufferings which man can inflict. Then think of that remarkable combination with this magnanimity, this integrity, this holy boldness; of meekness, patience, gentleness, forbearance; gentle as the lamb; how meek and patient in all his sufferings; and even after he was hanging on the fatal cross his language was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Then think of his active beneficence; abounding in love and charity towards all: all his miracles; the miracles of compassion; forever engaged in relieving distress; full of mercy and good works. Then think of his devotional character; how he spent whole nights in the solitude of the mountain-side, in communion with God. Think of his absolute resignation to his Father's will:—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as thou wilt. If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be

done. My meat is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven, and to finish his work." Think of his perfect fortitude; of the firmness and quietness with which he suffered. Above all, think of that wondrous and mysterious act of infinite love and condescension, when he who "was in the form of God, and thought it not a robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and, being formed and fashioned as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Think of the height of his glory; think of the depth of his humiliation; and you will then obtain some idea, according to the finiteness of your conception, of the infinite condescension, of the unbounded love, of Christ.

It is a standing miracle, which proves the truth of Christianity beyond the shadow of a single doubt, that a character such as that of our Lord Jesus Christ should be described and sustained without a fallacy, even by *one* writer. But when you find *four* historians, and the writers of the Epistles also, all of them speaking and writing on this subject, not in a formal, not in a systematic, but in an incidental, manner; and when you find that the character of Christ comes out from the whole of their productions, in a manner perfectly natural, and that the character is sustained, without the least stumbling, and without the least degree

of error, or difficulty, or contradiction, with perfect nicety, and developed in all its purity, beauty, and harmony,—I say, you have there a standing miracle, an internal evidence of the most undoubted character, of the divine origin of that religion which Christ came to reveal. And, further, when you compare the character thus developed with the moral law which he himself proclaimed, and find that the two things tally one with another, and perfectly correspond, even as the canopy of heaven above corresponds with the verdurous surface of the earth beneath,—I say, friends, that in this beautiful accordance, in the mighty scope, variety, and spirituality of the divine law, in the matchless manner with which that law was embodied in the example of Christ, and in the fitness of one to the other, you have a moral evidence strong enough to suspend a world upon. It is a chain upon which any weight might be hung with impunity, for it cannot be broken.

You will now perceive the point to which we are arrived. I have been appealing to you as rational men and women; I have been appealing to the noblest faculty of your reason. You know that the good shall live by faith; you also know that the Christian religion is founded, as far as it relates to evidence, on the basis of moral reason. You know that there is nothing in the world more truly reasonable, more justly *philosophical*, more clearly founded on unques-

tionable truth, and upon that which is proved to be the truth, than the Christian religion. And when you take into view these three lines of argument,—miracles, prophecy, and the moral weight of Christianity; when you go further, and trace it in its practical workings; when you find that it is the means, in the hands of God's divine providence, for that new creation which is still more eminently indicative of divine power than the visible creation itself; when you find that it is the means of converting, as far as it is truly received, the barren wilderness of man's thorny, fruitless, and wicked heart, into the garden of the Lord; when you find that it is the means of making that dreary wilderness blossom as the rose, even as the rose of Sharon: when you take all these things into view, away with the shadow of a doubt forever and for evermore. And, oh! let us no longer treat Christianity as if it were a delusion; for there are multitudes among the professors of the Christian name, who, on the one hand, admit its truth, and, on the other hand, live as if it were not true. But I call on you, my dear young friends, to act on a better principle; and knowing, from unquestionable evidence, that Christianity is true, and that it is the religion of God, I call upon you to act on this deliberate result, and henceforth to resign yourselves to the service of your heavenly Father, and, in good earnest, to take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ.



THIRD LECTURE.

ON THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN making a statement, when we last met, of the internal evidence of the truth of Christianity, I confined my attention very much to the revelation of the attributes of the Most High; of the moral law; and an examination of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, in point of fact, the argument respecting the internal evidence of the truth of our religion lies still deeper and extends much further than I have hitherto mentioned; for there are other great truths revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, of a most important and peculiar kind, far beyond the reach of human imagination and all the invention of moral philosophy. They are entirely beyond the perception of man, but, nevertheless, so completely adapted to their purpose as to carry with them an internal weight of evidence, of very great strength indeed, that they are the doctrines, not of man, but of God.

I hardly know a wider or more interesting

field in which we might expatriate, than in the internal evidence of the truth of Christianity. The philosophical truth of the effect of gravitation upon all material bodies—that they are drawn towards each other by a certain force of attraction—now appears a most familiar circumstance. In this day we give a ready assent to this doctrine of philosophy; but we can hardly believe that, one hundred and fifty years ago, this doctrine, which now appears so plain and so palpable, was entirely unknown: I know of nothing that more remarkably distinguishes the great discovery of Sir Isaac Newton than the simplicity and plainness of the truth, and its universal palpability, which is now so universally seen and understood. In the same way, there are some things declared in the Holy Scriptures, which are so evident, now they are revealed, that we can hardly suppose that men ever could be ignorant of such truths; and yet, until they were revealed by the Holy Scriptures, they were wholly unknown to men, and had never been reached by the utmost flights of uninspired moral philosophy. You have then, more particularly from that broad feature of divine truth so plainly revealed in Scripture and so amply confirmed by experience, so transfused into every page of the history of man,—the universal corruption of human nature! In how many, in how various forms has the wickedness of man displayed itself? Who can take up the pages of history, and observe how they

are stained with blood and all sorts of criminality, without perceiving that there must be some general cause for the facts which abound on every side of the description which I have now mentioned? For example, when we reflect on the horrors of the slave-trade, and slavery,—horrors familiar to the minds of many of my young friends, I doubt not,—to what original cause can we trace them? to what general cause, to what *one* cause, can we trace all these multitudinous forms of iniquity which deface the history of our species? This is a question which never was answered by uninspired moral philosophers, who would always set out at the wrong end, and begin with describing man as virtuous instead of vicious. But the Holy Scriptures declare the original cause of these iniquities,—namely, the corruption of the heart of man in his fallen state; and I hardly know any one truth which more remarkably distinguishes the records of inspiration than that which is couched in such forcible language, such concentrated language, by the prophet Jeremiah:—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And, further, the origin and root of this corruption is also developed in Scripture, in the history which is there given of the fall of our first parents, and of the descent of their corrupt nature from father to son in every generation.

You will perceive, from this brief statement, that the Holy Scriptures represent mankind as

requiring not only the revelation of divine truth, not only light, not only information, not only precept, but, in one word, Redemption. A vast, divine, powerful plan is required for the restoration of fallen and corrupt man to his original state of virtue and conformity to the divine will. The whole bearing of the Christian religion is practical; and this is one of the most important principles for my young friends to keep in view, because, when we enter a little into these points, it is not for the purpose of gratifying a spirit of speculation or of human curiosity, but to show the practical workings of that mighty plan which God has ordained for man's salvation.

And here we come to what may truly be called the very centre and turning-point, the very hinge and moving principle, of the Christian system; and that is, the divinity of Jesus Christ. Were we in need of information only, were we by nature virtuous, and had only to have information of our duty in order to be enabled to do it, were there no change to be wrought in us, were there no guilt to be removed from us, then indeed we might do with a religion which would exclude the divine character of our dear Redeemer; then indeed it would be enough for us that he should be a mere man and prophet, and correctly declare those truths which it is our duty to believe and those virtues which we are called to practise. But God deals with us as with lost sinners;

and when we come to view ourselves in this character and in this capacity,—when we find that we are in danger of everlasting destruction, and that nothing but a hand of divine and omnipotent love can save us from this destruction,—then we have recourse with joy and gratitude to the glorious doctrine that Jesus Christ our Saviour is not only man, but God ! You know that it is written in Scripture that the just shall live by faith ; that without faith it is impossible to please God, and that without faith no man can be recovered from his lost condition. Now, in whom do the Scriptures require us to believe, in order that we may witness the salvation of God ? There is nothing more abhorrent from the whole scope of Scripture, nothing more opposed to the harmony and nature of truth, than the strange notion which some persons entertain, that faith in a mere man, or in a mere creature of God, can be the means of his salvation. No, friends ! God admits of no rival. He is a jealous God. He allows of no form of idolatry ; and, although we are called upon to believe the words of any inspired prophet, it is idolatry in the sight of God, that we should believe in any mere prophet, as the Saviour in whom we are to trust. "I am the Lord ; I am King and God," saith Jehovah ; "and besides me there is no Saviour." Now, if my young friends will apply this principle, and illustrate by it certain passages in the New Testament, the consequence will be, that they will imme-

diately perceive the force of the evidence of Scripture for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. What does he himself say? "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." There he upholds himself as the object, the appointed object, of saving faith. And, again, we may compare with this the words of the apostle:—"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." So that the very fact of our being required to believe in him, as the Saviour of our souls, when compared with the general tenor of Scripture, at once establishes the doctrine of his divinity; and it is quite impossible, consistently with the principles of Scripture, to believe, for the purpose of salvation, in any being, however glorious, however wise, however exalted,—nay, not in the highest of all archangels,—for the purpose of salvation, except in God. However, I trust that my beloved young friends have no disposition to turn away from that Head and Spring of all our hopes. I think I can trust them for not entertaining any desire to build their house on any other foundation. I believe it is very generally known and truly acknowledged among us, that this is the foundation that is sure, and which no man can overturn,—Christ Jesus. At the same time, I consider that it is a very pleasing and a necessary duty, for those who have it in their power,

to endeavour in some degree to enlighten the understanding of their younger brethren and sisters respecting that flood of evidence which from every quarter is poured forth, in wondrous harmony, to elucidate, to establish, and forever to confirm and settle, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.

But, before I enter into a view of this evidence, I must just be allowed to explain the ground on which I am now standing. In unfolding the evidence of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, I have appealed exclusively to the reasoning faculty; but when the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures is once established, we come into the dawn of childlike faith, and there is no sound method of argument left us but unfolding those passages of Scripture which bear on particular points. Our only ground of evidence here is, God has said it, and therefore we must believe it. Lord Bacon—who was certainly one of the most sagacious of our species, a man of sound reason—says, and admirably well, that revealed theology is the Sabbath and haven of man's speculations; and I wish my young friends may take this principle home with them, and never forget it. There is no folly in the world greater or more dangerous than bringing our own speculation to bear on the investigation of Christian doctrine, instead of taking the simple words given to us by the Lord in his Holy Scriptures, in their *simple meaning*. We are in this respect

to be as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word, not to gratify our curiosity, not to puff us up with notions, but for a practical purpose,—that we may grow thereby; and the reason, the true reason, why men do not receive (many of them) the truths declared in Scripture in their native simplicity and beauty, is this:—that they have got into the habit of teaching the apostles and prophets, instead of being taught by them. We are to sit at the feet of the apostles and prophets as children, and we are to allow them to teach us, and receive their lessons with all humility. And oh that my beloved young friends, towards whom my heart glows with much affection, may all of them be firmly built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone! Then they will be in the way of all that is true, of all that is happy, of all that is holy.

Let an earnest inquirer, who desires to be taught by the apostles and prophets, open the New Testament, and he will there find the delineation of that wondrous character to which I adverted on a former evening. He will read an account of an individual who performed divine works, who assumed the divine character, and whose character in various respects might truly be called superhuman, although at the same time he was encompassed with the natural infirmities of man, but without sin,—who was born and died a human being. The question

immediately arises, Had this wondrous individual any existence before his human birth, or was he simply and wholly a man, born as a man, and not uniting with his humanity any higher or more powerful nature? Let the Evangelist answer this question; let Jesus Christ himself, in his own gracious words, answer this question. In the first place, you know that John the Baptist was older by half a year than our blessed Saviour: and yet what does John the Baptist say about Christ? He says, "He that cometh after me was preferred before me, for he was before me:" therefore, Christ existed before John the Baptist. David, you know, lived about a thousand years before the Christian era; and yet David, in spirit, acknowledged Christ to be his Lord:—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool:" therefore Christ was existing in some nature at the time of David, a thousand years before his incarnation. As we go backwards, we come to that servant of the Lord, Job, who, according to all probability, was of an earlier date than Moses, or possibly contemporary with him,—we may say about one thousand five hundred years before Christ. What does Job say on the subject? "Oh that my words were written! [you will find it in the 19th chapter;] oh that they were printed in a book, that they were graven with an iron pen, and graven in a rock! I know that my Redeemer liveth, and

shall stand in the latter day upon the earth :" so that Christ was living one thousand five hundred years before his appearance in the world. Well, then, Abraham, who lived about one thousand nine hundred years before Christ. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad," is declared by Jesus, in the 8th chapter of John. " Why," said the Jews, " thou art not yet fifty years old ; and hast thou seen Abraham ? " What was the answer ? " Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth : was Christ in existence then ? Yes, for Christ is called the Word by the Apostle John, in the beginning of his Gospel, and he says, " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God : the same was in the beginning with God." I shall come afterwards to the other part of the passage ; but here is a proof of his existence when heaven and earth were made. Did he exist before ? Read the words of his own prayer, in the 17th of John : — " And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." There we have that point. Did he then exist from all eternity ? Was there no limit to his nature or being ? None whatsoever. Turn to the 5th chapter of Micah, and there you will find, " And thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among *the thousands of Judah*, yet out of thee shall

he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." But the doctrine of his existing from all eternity is furthermore established by a remarkable passage in the book of Revelation, where, in the first place, God the Father, and afterwards our Lord Jesus Christ, uses language like this:—"I am the beginning and the ending;" "I am the Alpha and the Omega," (the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet.) This expression is what is called a Hebraism; for the Jews were accustomed to represent the perfection of any thing by bringing together the first and last letters of the alphabet, and they used to say that the price was from *Aleph* to *Tau*, (the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet,) and such other things. If a man was from *Aleph* to *Tau* in any particular thing, he was perfect in such a matter. And therefore, when our Saviour comes forward and says, "I am Alpha and Omega," it means to say with respect to duration; for it is obvious that it respects duration. He says, "In me is the perfection of duration:" that is to say, "I am the Eternal Being, which was, and is, and is to come."

I think this is a chain of evidence which no man who has the slightest regard for the plain meaning of Scripture can by any possibility thwart, deny, or contradict. It is one thing for a man to tell me, in the face of all the

evidence which I have already produced, that the Scriptures are a forgery. Can I consider such a man not to be the most frivolous of his species, and the most absurd, unless his absurdity be exceeded by the absurdity of that man who on the one hand acknowledges that the Scriptures are genuine, and on the other hand rejects their plain and most prescriptive testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ, or to any other doctrine? Now comes the great question, therefore, In what nature was it that our blessed Saviour pre-existed? Was it in the nature of an archangel, of the highest of created beings? No, friends; we are in possession of the clearest scriptural evidence that it was in the nature and the being of God himself; for, in the first place, we have already proved our point by the very fact of his eternal pre-existence. There is but one Being who is from everlasting to everlasting, and that Being is God: and, in the next place, we find him represented, in a most remarkable passage in the 2d chapter of Philippians, as not thinking it a robbery to be equal with God:—"Who, being in the form of God," (the word *form* there is the same, in all probability, with the word *nature*. It is the peculiar manner in which the word *form* was used in that day; who being in the *nature* of God,) "thought it not a robbery to be equal with God, but, condescending from that high estate, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and

was made in the likeness of man." But here is another point arising before me:—by what do we prove the being and omnipotence of God? Is it not by pointing out the wonderful works of nature? Is it not by proving, in innumerable designs, the existence of an ever-present Designer? All the work of the creation is plainly ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ:—"By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made." This is most definite: all things made by him; not one thing in all the visible, glorious, boundless universe made without him. And again, in the 10th verse of the same chapter of John, "He came into the world, and the world was made by him." What can be more definite? Then, in the first of Hebrews, "God, in these last days, hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world." And then in the first of Colossians and the 16th verse, (and I do hope that my friends will record these passages on the tablets of their memory,) speaking of who is the image of the invisible God; the first of all, (of *every* creature of the whole creation, is the meaning,) "For by him were all things created, whether they be visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." What can be more explicit? Who can doubt for a single moment, therefore, that he is God?

But, further than that, there is the spiritual and internal work: there is the work of divine illumination, wherewith he can bestow the spirit of righteousness upon man; wherewith he can enlighten him with the light of moral truth; who with it can guide him by a heavenly light on his way to heaven. Could man do that? Could an angel do that? Could any human creature do it? No, it is the work of God himself, and this work is ascribed to Christ; for Christ is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is often a matter of surprise to me that any person should have dared, at any time, to ascribe to our religion any doubts respecting the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; because that great doctrine which we have always so plainly advocated—that Christ is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, by his Spirit—contains in itself as direct, as clear, as powerful a proof of his actual deity as any thing which it is possible to conceive.

Now, friends, there is a branch of this subject into the particulars of which time will not allow me to go, but I wish to recommend it to the investigation of my young friends. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs and prophets of old, were better acquainted with the Son of God than many of us are aware of. They were acquainted with a mysterious messenger of the Most High, sometimes called the *Word*, and sometimes the *angel of God*, who

appeared to them on a variety of occasions, and who constantly in his addresses to them assumed the character, and often the name, of God ; as, for example, when he spoke to Hagar in the wilderness, and when her language in reply was, "Thou, God, seest me;" and as when he spoke to Moses in the burning bush, (it burnt but was not consumed,) what did he say?—"I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob :" and, again, when he conversed with Abraham on the plain of Mamre; when he called to Abraham again out of heaven, when the knife was proffered to his son :—"Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me." And, again, when he appeared to Gideon and Manoah, (the father of Samson,) and on many other occasions. There can be no doubt that it was our blessed Redeemer who was known by Job as the Living One, and of whom Jacob speaks when he says, "The angel who redeemed me from all evil bless the lads." Oh, may the angel that can alone redeem us from all evil bless my beloved young friends, and may they be his whole servants, and his faithful followers ! When all these things occurred, there was the visible appearance of a wondrous Being, who was sent of God the Father, and, nevertheless, claimed plainly both the attributes and the name of God. And can we for a moment doubt who this was ? There is a very remarkable evidence in the 3d chapter of Ma-

lachi :—“The Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, (or angel, as it is in Hebrew,) whom ye delight in : but who shall abide the day of his coming, or who shall stand when he appears ? For he is as the refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.” Now, you will understand that the word angel simply means messenger, the sent of God, “the angel of the covenant ;” and he was to come to his own temple. And then the apostle says, on the subject of his incarnation, “In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those under the law.” This agrees with what we read in the 1st chapter of John, and the 14th verse :—“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Now, there is nothing more cardinal in Christianity, nothing of higher import to its practical efficacy, than a full acknowledgment of the doctrine of the incarnation. It was the great point by which the apostles were commanded to try the spirits :—“Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God,” says the apostle. Of course this expression would be totally inapplicable to a man born into the world after the usual way, but it applies to a Being who pre-existed in a higher nature, and took the nature of man upon him ; and that is its only possible meaning, I

apprehend. And when we turn to the 2d of Hebrews, we there find that "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." This is indeed a deep display, far beyond the scope of human intelligence. No man living can possibly say how it was; it is one of those secrets of a divine and infinite Being, which must be forever hidden from us during our present state of existence. But what of that, my dear friends? Is there any one of you that can tell me how the body and the soul are connected together?—in what way their union is effected? You know the fact; you cannot deny the fact; but the *how* is beyond the scope of your investigation. And so the doctrine is clear, of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. You cannot deny the doctrine; it gleams forth in the brightest characters in every page of Scripture; but the *how*, the mode of that doctrine, is not a subject for human speculation. The doctrine is to be received with the simplicity of children, for its practical purposes; and let me tell you, my dear friends, that on this cardinal doctrine, on this wonderful and mysterious union, wholly incomprehensible in its mode, but intelligible in its operations, hangs the mighty system of our salvation. And may we all rejoice in the remembrance that Christ was man to suffer and to sympathize, and God to save!

The doctrine that Christ was really man,

and took upon him the body and soul of a man when he was born a child into the world, is abundantly evidenced throughout the New Testament and the Old Testament. "Unto us a child is born;" and his origin was from the Israelites, and from the tribe of Judah, and from the family of David; and his birth, of his virgin mother, I have already alluded to on a former occasion. Follow him to the well of Sychar, weary with his journey in that hot and dreary region, and mark the traces of the weakness of the man. Follow him to the garden of Gethsemane, and mark the deep agitation of a human soul :—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Follow him to Mount Calvary, and mark the quivering lips of the dying man when the words had just escaped them, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. But although, my beloved friends, his humanity was so clearly marked, it was but a veil, through which his divinity continued to shine on every side with lustrous brightness : for when he was standing upon earth he performed the works of God. When the poor leper came and bowed down at his feet, and said, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean,"—when he pronounced his own almighty fiat, and said, "I will : be thou clean,"—he spoke, he acted, in the character of God. When he stood at the grave of Lazarus and, in his own authority, commanded the dead to rise,

he spoke and he acted in the same character. When, in the midst of the boisterous ocean, he arose and rebuked the wild and stormy elements of nature,—when on a single word of his, all was stillness and all was calm,—he spoke and he acted in the character of God.

And when he raised himself from the dead he acted in the same character ; for it is well worthy of observation, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is ascribed by the New Testament both to the Father and to the Son. The Father raised up the Son, and yet it is ascribed to the Son, who is one with him in the divine nature. “Destroy this temple, and after three days I will raise it up again ;” and he spake of the temple of his body. Therefore, he performed the works of God. Well, but, some of my young friends may say, did not the apostles also perform the works of God ? Did not they work miracles ? Yes, truly : the prophets of old, and the apostles, were enabled to work miracles ; but they did not work them by their own power, or in their own names. When Moses lifted up his arm over the Red Sea, *the Lord caused* the waters to flow back. When Joshua uttered his memorable words, it was *the Lord* who listened to his prayer and stayed the bodies of heaven in their course. When Peter and John, at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, were made the means of restoring the poor cripple, they spoke not, they acted not, in

their own names, but they said, "In the name of *Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, rise up and walk;" and afterwards Peter declared that by His name, even by Him, he was restored to that perfect soundness in the presence of them all; so that the apostles went and preached, and the Lord Jesus worked with them, confirming their words by signs following. And if you will observe the difference between the miracles of our Lord and of his apostles, you will see in both of them holy proofs of his divinity. Now, as one particular instance: when the Apostle Peter stood at the bedside of Eneas, what did he say? "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Well, friends, he performed the works of God through Christ,—through Christ, *who* assumed the character of God when he said, "Before Abraham was," (he did not say I was;) he said, "Before Abraham was, *I am*." Here he spoke in the character of God. Oh, may all the world acknowledge thy word, that before all worlds, and from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God! He spoke in the character of God when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He spoke in the character of God when he said, "I and my Father are one: he that hath seen *me* [again he said] hath seen the Father: how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father?" Thus he plainly assumed on these occasions, and on many others, the divine character; and when,

after his resurrection, he breathed on his apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," he spoke as one who could bestow the Holy Ghost; he spoke as God; and not only so, but he received divine homage; he was the object of worship. When Cornelius, in his mistaken zeal, bowed down at the feet of Peter, with an act that might be called worship, Peter said, "Stand up, for I also am a man." When John, dazzled by the splendour of the angel who talked to him, bowed down to worship at his feet, the language went forth, "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant: worship God." But, when the apostles bowed in worship before their Saviour, they met with no rebuke; when the wise men of the East came and worshipped him, it was not accounted to them for a sin. When the poor man who had been born blind first professed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and then showed his faith by falling down and worshipping him, he met with no rebuke. When the poor leper, sensible of his own bodily corruption, fell down and worshipped him, he met with no punishment for the act; he met with the blessed reward of his faith, and was delivered from his sickness. So you see, that even during the stay of our Lord upon earth, we have the clearest evidence of his divine character. By his death on the cross he burst the bonds of death and sin. He appears again to his disciples;

he ascends into heaven, and sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And here, in describing his glorious reign, the sacred writers represent him as possessing divine power and supreme authority over all beings. All power is given to him in heaven and in earth, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth. Now, here is an authority by which he rules over the universe, and which it is impossible he should possess unless he were God. Then he is described as the Author of grace,—grace, the most precious of all God's gifts ; grace, by which our sinful souls are renovated and saved. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits ! Then he is described as the object of prayer : Stephen addressed his prayers to the glorified Redeemer, when on the point of death he said, “ Lay not this sin to their charge ; ” and, again, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” But we are taught, friends, that the hour is coming when Christ will appear again for the judgment of the quick and dead,—when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him ; and, while the Scriptures plainly declare that even in his reign in the day of judgment he is the Son of man, still a friend

and a brother to sympathize, they also bear, in reference to this subject, the clearest testimony to his divine attributes. Now, can you conceive, friends, is it possible for any man to imagine, a stronger proof of the omnipotence of God, than will be displayed by the resurrection of the dead, by the changing those innumerable spiritual bodies, like unto the body of our Lord himself, which shall be, at the collection of the spirits of the just, made perfect to all eternity ? Yet this act is ascribed to Jesus Christ :—"I am the bread of life, and I will raise them up at the last day;" and again, in the 3d chapter of Philippians :—"Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the power wherewith he is able to subdue all things unto himself." What can be more explicit ?

Then all judgment is committed to him :—"We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ :" and how is it possible that any being whose intelligence is less than divine can penetrate all the thoughts, all the actions, all the words, of all mankind ? No ; it is in the character of God that Jesus Christ speaks, when he says, in the 2d chapter of the book of Revelation, "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts ; and I will give unto every

one of you according to your works." And, last of all, as to him is ascribed the creation of all things visible, so he is also represented as folding them up as a vesture, and bringing all things visible to their end. You find, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou endurest, and they all shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." If any man will take the trouble of reflecting on this wondrous line of evidence which I have now endeavoured to unfold, and will trace it from its beginning to its end, and observe the agreement of one part with another, he will find it a line, a chain, a series and order of evidence which has no parallel.

But there is one point which I have withheld from your view:—that, while we have this wondrous chain of evidence respecting the divine attributes of Christ, in every stage of his revealed history, we also find that he was called by the name of God, and that it was directly declared that he was God; and this crowns my whole argument. It is singularly satisfactory, and worthy of our close remark, that the name of God, or the name of Jehovah, is applied in Scripture to our Lord Jesus Christ, in reference

to all the successive stages of his history. In the first place, we read, in the 1st chapter of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There the name is most plainly ascribed to Christ in his pre-existence; to which many passages might be added from the history of the angel of the covenant. Then take his birth:—"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God," (9th chapter of Isaiah.) Then take his tarriance on earth: what says John the Baptist of our Saviour?—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," (John came to prepare for the ministry of Christ,) "Prepare ye the way of the LORD," (that is, the LORD in large letters, which always stands for Jehovah;) "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH." He was made manifest by his incarnation, and by his outward ministry to the people. And what says the apostle in the 3d chapter of Timothy?—a passage on which I wish to observe, that the genuineness of it, though once disputed, is now brought out, by subsequent critical inquiry, with resistless force and illumination:—"Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified by the

Spirit, (proved to be divine, that is, by his miraculous works,) seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." It is clear, when we come even to the mysterious moment of his death, (and we know that he could die only as man,) that his divine character is asserted even in reference to this point, in the book of Zechariah:— "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, (saith Jehovah,) and they shall mourn for him as a man mourneth for his only son, and they shall be in bitterness for him, as a man who is in bitterness for his first-born." Then his resurrection after his death. You remember the unbelieving Thomas: when our Lord showed him his wounded side and hands, Thomas no longer dared to doubt, but answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." Was this profession of faith acceptable to Jesus? Yes. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed."

Then we come to his glorious reign; and there we have abundant passages: for example, "A king shall reign in righteousness." In the 23d chapter of Jeremiah, "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice on the earth. And this is the name whereby he shall be called: the Lord (that is, Jehovah) our righteousness." With this pas-

sage we compare another, and it is one among a selection with which I may very well close my chain of evidence. In the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle mourns over his Jewish countrymen, and where he describes their many privileges, he says, "Whose was the glory, and the adoption, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." I wish just to observe, that after a long, and I may say studious, examination of the subject, according to my opportunities and ability, I can say in truth, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that not one of the passages which I have this night quoted is fairly capable, on any critical grounds, of a different interpretation than I have now given to it. And I would observe, as a very satisfactory circumstance, that many of the ancient fathers of the Church, who wrote in Greek,—that is, in the very language in which these passages are given,—always used them in the same way, and gave them that interpretation which I have now done. They gave the original Greek, applying it just as I would translate it; and it is, in fact, capable of no other translation, and no other meaning: therefore do not for a moment be misled by any person who dares to say, that such and such a passage,

describing the divinity of Christ, is capable of a different interpretation; for, in point of fact, the more the subject is investigated, the more all the niceties of the language are known, the more we go into the critical particulars of such passages, the more is the only plain and orthodox interpretation established beyond all possible contradiction. And therefore you see the point to which we are brought: we prove the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; we plainly prove that the doctrine of Scripture is the divinity of Christ, and therefore we are compelled, not only by the obligation of the Christian believer, but we are compelled by the principles of reason, of inductive philosophy, of common sense, to accept with the utmost readiness, to embrace with the greatest credulity, the glorious doctrine of the divinity of Christ: and may there not be a single individual in this interesting assembly who shall ever turn his back on this greatest and most sublime truth, the very centre and spring of man's salvation!

Before we separate, I wish to advert to another doctrine, most intimately connected with that of the divinity of Christ, and of equal importance in a practical point of view, freely acknowledged by all who are called orthodox Christians, more and more confirmed, valued, and cherished, by all who love the truth and know their own sinfulness. I mean this doc-

trine:—that Jesus Christ, being clothed with humanity, died on the cross to be a propitiation, or a sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that he bore the penalty which was due to us, and that by his stripes we are healed. And the forgiveness of sin is attained by poor, sinful man, when he comes with a penitent heart and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for his sins. This doctrine is plainly declared by our Saviour himself, again and again:—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life.” Again he said, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” This is no new doctrine: when he came upon earth, it had been, to a certain extent, witnessed before; the Jews had always been accustomed to the shadow of it, and doubtless some of the more enlightened of them had a sort of notion of the substance of it, though it might be a slight notion. But when Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain, when animal food was not permitted to man, and when there was no apparent meaning in slaying an innocent lamb, he slew a lamb, and that was called a better sacrifice of faith: there was an expressive figure of that bleesed truth, of which that shadow was fulfilled. When

Abraham, instead of taking the lamb, was about to sacrifice his only-begotten son, and when at last he plunged his knife into the ram caught in the thicket, what was it? It was a type, a figure of the sacrifice of Christ. When, morning and evening, (at nine in the morning and three in the afternoon,) day after day, month after month, year after year, century after century, the lamb of the burnt-offering, the spotless male lamb of a year old, was slain in the temple, always spotless, always pure, what was it? Was there any real efficacy in the blood of those animals, or were they a shadow of good things to come? Were they not expressive representatives of that one sacrifice which God hath prepared for all them that are sanctified? When on the great day of atonement, (16th chapter of Leviticus,) the tenth day of the seventh month, now called September, (the ninth month, as we should call it,)—when, on the tenth of that month, on the great day of atonement, the high-priest went into the holy of holies, with the blood of the bull and the goat, (the bullock sacrificed for his sin, and the goat for the sins of the people,) and sprinkled the mercy-seat with their blood; when he confessed the sins of the people over the head of the scape-goat, and the other goat finds its way into an unknown land, and takes away (in a figurative sense) the sins of the people with him; when the high-priest, before this cere-

mony, divested himself of his gorgeous robes and clothed himself in humble linen garments, and the victim was burnt without the camp; and, when the whole ceremony was over, the high-priest again invested himself in the gorgeous robes he wore before,—do not you understand it? Are there any of my dear young friends who do not know enough of the ever-blessed truth to read these types? who cannot see a most expressive representation of the mighty scheme? The high-priest unclothed himself of his glorious garments; Christ comes down from his glory in heaven. The high-priest clothes himself in humble, lowly, linen garments, holy and pure; Christ took upon him the lowly nature of man. The high-priest sacrifices a bullock and a goat, for his own sins and the sins of the people; Christ offered up himself his own precious blood, and sprinkles that upon the mercy-seat. The victim is burnt without the camp; Christ was crucified without the walls of Jerusalem. The scape-goat carries away the sins of the people to an unknown land and uninhabited. And what said John the Baptist of Christ?—“Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” And, friends, if you will come with a penitent and obedient heart, and truly believe on the crucified Immanuel, he will bear away all your sins, though they may be red like scarlet, as it were, into an unknown land and uninhabited,—

blessed be his name! And there is your only means of reconciliation; there is no other way to the Father,—to happiness,—to peace. Oh, may you all come home to Christ; may you cast the burden of your sins on him, and may you be individually invested in that white robe which was made so white as no fuller on earth could whiten it, because it was washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb!

We come now to the words of prophecy: and oh, how wonderful they are, friends! I was speaking of the prophecy of the 53d chapter of Isaiah,—a prophecy of the truth of our religion:—“All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” Never was language more precise, more definite; never was language less capable of a double interpretation. All is here unfolded to us; the great doctrine that Christ bore the iniquities of us all upon him, and that we reap the reward, is here unfolded; and may it ever be precious to all our souls!

When we open the pages of the New Testament, does it not break upon us with a light unparalleled by the invention of man? Does it not abound in every page of the apostles' writings? When Paul once knew that Christ was his Saviour, it seems as if he could scarcely avoid the perpetual mention of the subject. “I

determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "All have sinned," says he, in the 3d chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "and come short of the glory of God." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, for the forgiveness of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." And Peter, in his 1st chapter, says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." John says, "He is a propitiation for our sins," (the word propitiation is the same word in the Greek, and answers to that word in the Hebrew which in the Old Testament was always translated atonement; and propitiation and atonement are synonymous;) therefore, "He is an *atonement* for our sins;" (a sacrificial offering is the meaning of it;) "a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." And mark those words, "*For the sins of the whole world;*" for it is the grand doctrine of Christianity, that Christ died for the sins of all mankind. Then turn to the Hebrews, and there you find that beautiful comparison between the shadow of the law and the substance of the gospel, which confirms and elucidates the whole subject in a most glorious manner:—"If the blood of bulls and goats, and

the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God!" I might go from passage to passage, from writer to writer, and from book to book, till time would fail me; but, finally, let us remember that glorious vision of the Apostle John, when he saw the innumerable company of the redeemed, around the throne, gathered out of every kindred, and tongue, and people. And wherewith were they clothed? They were clothed in white robes. And who were they? "They are they," said the angel, "who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Well, friends, if you desire, as unquestionably you do, to join that harmonious, glorious company, see that there be in you the simplicity and strength of the Christian faith; go, wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb. I cannot allow myself to conclude, without shortly pointing out the inseparable connection between these two doctrines. When a man once denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, he soon begins to deny the doctrine of the atonement. No man can entertain any proper view of the doctrine of atonement, unless he also admits the divinity

of Christ. Mere man cannot atone for his brother. An angel, an archangel, the highest of created intelligences, cannot bear the burden of universal sin. No, it is a burden which omnipotence alone can bear, and therefore here is a refuge, and here is a strength, and a joy, that he who was, and is, God forever, was made man, that he might die on the cross to save us, and through a loving faith in his blood we may live to all eternity. And by what possible means, my dear friends, could God so clearly display his abhorrence of sin as by appointing his own Son to be the only sacrifice for sin? On the other hand, by what possible means could God display his mercy to the sinner with so much brilliancy and strength as by sending his own Son into the world to die for sinners? So that in this glorious dispensation the holiness and love of God are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and the divine attributes, without being confused, are blended in matchless beauty and matchless splendour; and I am bold to say, that there is nothing which has ever been presented to the attention of man, which throws so glorious a light on the holiness and on the love of God, as the joint and inseparable doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ. And therefore, friends, let us rejoice in this foundation; let us be strong and immovable in the faith once delivered to the saints; let us

never veer to the right hand or to the left ; let us imbibe these things with true simplicity ; but oh, friends, let us remember that these things are to bear on our affections, they are to take hold of our love, they are to bring our love into action, they are to lead us, by the cords of love, into the path of obedience and into the way of holiness ; and thus we become new creatures in Christ Jesus : and how, friends ? Not by our own power ; not by our own devising ; not by our own imagination ; not by the mere exercise of the understanding ; but by the agency of God's Holy Spirit on the soul of man. I have occupied the attention of my dear young friends long enough. Oh that what has now been said may fall deeply into many a memory, many a mind, and many a heart ! But it is my intention, if the Lord permit, to occupy another evening, in the course of next week, in order to unfold the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and especially to show to my young friends how remarkably scriptural were the views which the early Friends were enlightened to take on this doctrine. I conceive that many of them would like to have a little information, and I propose, therefore, if life and health permit, to go into the scriptural view of the doctrine of the Spirit, when we next meet together. Oh that we may all be the spiritually-minded followers of the crucified and risen and glorified Immanuel !

FOURTH LECTURE.

ON THE
INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,
AND THE
Peculiarities of the Society of Friends.

ALTHOUGH it is my particular wish to avoid confusing meetings of the description that are now gathered, with meetings for worship in the highest sense of the term, I am thankful for the remarks that we have had this evening, and I wish just to say, in the first instance, that I am fully convinced that nothing can qualify us for any religious service but the Lord's Holy Spirit. There are, it is very true, a diversity of gifts, and the same person may be called upon at different times to exercise different gifts; and the Apostle Paul distinguishes between the gifts of preaching and teaching; but I wish explicitly to state that, as an individual, I dare not engage in what I apprehend to be the exer-

cise of either of these gifts, otherwise than in simple dependence on the Lord's anointing, and I wish my dear friends to understand, that I would on no account appoint a meeting of this description, did I not find it laid upon me as a duty arising at that specific time, and under a direct pointing to that specific object. I thought these words of explanation were due to my dear friends, that there might be no misunderstanding on what I apprehend to be a simple subject. I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity afforded me, under what I trust is some measure of the best means, of communicating information to my beloved young friends on the most important of all subjects.

So long a time has now elapsed since we last met in this way, that my friends will, I trust, allow me just to refer shortly to the other evenings which we passed together. On the first evening, I was led to unfold the historical evidence of the genuineness of Scripture, and the truth of the miracles, and the evidence afforded, by the miracles themselves, of the divine origin of our holy religion. On the next occasion we considered together the subject of prophecy and its fulfilment, and the internal evidence of the Christian religion ; and I trust it was made fully apparent to those who were present on those occasions, that it is scarcely possible to conceive ~~any~~ moral evidence more strong, more diversi-

fied, or more harmonious, than that which proves the truth of the Christian religion. On the third evening which we passed together, I endeavoured to give some information to my dear young friends respecting the evidence contained in the Scriptures themselves, of these cardinal and most important doctrines,—the eternal divinity and atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ; because I am well aware that the great object of Scripture was to testify of Christ; and I do delight in endeavouring to lay before my young friends the vast, harmonious, and most explicit chain of evidence which proves the truth of these doctrines, as doctrines of Scripture. I did at that time make an application, not only to the understanding, but more especially to the memories, of my young friends, and I trust the labour has not been lost in this respect; I trust the substance of this evidence has been remembered, and through the memory it may find its way to the heart, where alone true faith has its residence,—saving faith. And now my present object is to endeavour to unfold another most important and cardinal doctrine of religion, and to show the evidence on which it rests: I mean the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; and if we should be favoured to get clearly through this subject, my young friends will then be left, I trust, with a clear general view upon their minds of all that is essential, of all that is important, or pecu-

liarly important, of those doctrines which are written in the Holy Scriptures for our learning, and which immediately affect the greatest of all points,—the salvation of our souls.

In treating on this part of the subject, I shall have to advert in the course of the evening to the sentiments and principles of the religious Society of Friends, and to many of those views which at present distinguish them from other Christian bodies. In doing this, my object is not to enter into controversy, for I believe controversy will never do us good: my object is to elucidate the subject to the minds of my younger brethren and sisters, and to endeavour to show them that our views are not in their nature sectarian, but that they are simple views of the religion of Jesus, as it is plainly contained in the New Testament. The more we know of religion, the less we shall value names, sects, and parties; but I trust the more my young friends examine the contents of the New Testament with care and impartiality, the more they will be confirmed in the root and ground of the Christian testimonies, and the more forcibly they will feel impelled, with a greater degree of magnanimity, to take up their cross in all these matters, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

When our blessed Saviour was about to leave his disciples and to ascend to his native glory, he gave them a commission to baptize all

nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. I shall afterwards, I believe, find occasion to show that, according to my view of the subject, the baptism which was here communicated to the disciples was one of a purely spiritual nature. It was, as I believe, the baptism of the Word preached; and by the living and powerful ministry they were to baptize their hearers, not *in* the name, but, as the original has it, *into* the name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But the point to which I wish to solicit the attention of my young friends, on the present occasion, is this:—that they are not only to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, but also into the name of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, as well as the Father and Son, is an object of the Christian faith and of the Christian allegiance. Now, it is very evident that in this passage the Father is described as the Divine Being, the Son is described in the same character, and the Holy Ghost is also described in the same character. We cannot suppose for a moment that the Father and the Son should here be mentioned in what we may call their personal character, and that the Holy Ghost should here be mentioned only as an influence,—as a thing, however valuable, or however heavenly. No, friends; a plain interpretation of this passage, according to the law of sound criticism and

plain sense, involves the doctrine that the Holy Ghost is God; and this is one of those fundamental doctrines which, I am happy to assert, was always maintained with clearness and integrity by our forefathers in the truth.

There are many other passages of Scripture which confirm this important doctrine. Do we not read that when Paul and Barnabas were sent forth in the work of the ministry, the Holy Ghost said unto the persons who were then assembled, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them"? Do we not read in the epistles of Paul, in the 12th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, that "The Holy Ghost divideth his gifts to every man severally as he willeth"? And when we examine the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John's Gospel, we shall find the Holy Ghost promised to the disciples in the name of the Comforter; and it is expressly asserted that he should not speak of himself, but that as he should hear so should he speak; that he should take of the things of Christ and show them to the believer; and that he should guide us into all truth. Again, the Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "God is a Spirit;" and hence it plainly follows, by the converse of the proposition, that the Spirit is God. Without pursuing a lengthened line of argument upon this point, I wish to impress it on the minds of all my young friends, as of essential

importance; and I trust that every individual present will indeed be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forever.

Are there any of you who, because this doctrine is beyond the reach of human reason, are therefore ready to conclude that it cannot be received? This would be vain reasoning indeed: it is a doctrine not contrary to reason, but beyond it. There is one point of view in which God is one; there is another point of view in which he is three,—Father, Son, and Spirit; and how these things are, what is the *mode* of this doctrine, which is not revealed to us, is beyond the utmost reach of our faculties; for God is an infinite and incomprehensible Being, and the secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children to do them; and what we want to know is but the way in which these high and holy doctrines affect the great object of the soul's salvation; and while they are utterly beyond the scope of human philosophy, in their practical application they are clear to the simple-hearted believer. They were cordially received, they have been cordially received, by men of the most stupendous intellect,—for instance, by such a man as Lord Bacon; and they are cordially received by the cottager, who only returns from his day's labour to read his chapter in the Bible in the evening,

and even by the child at school. The mode of these things is as much beyond the intellectual powers of a Bacon or a Newton, as it is beyond the intellectual power of a little child ; but the practical application of them for the good purpose of the soul's salvation is equally clear to both. In fact, these things are apprehended by simple faith ; and, having already proved that the Holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and contain pure truth without any mixture, true philosophy and the soundest reason most obviously demand our accepting the contents of Scripture in simple faith ; and oh that the faith of my beloved young friends may be confirmed, settled, and established in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, blessed forever !

I think I have already had the opportunity of pointing out those passages which prove that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all men. The Father would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of his truth ; the Son, in his human nature, died for all men ; and I believe that there is plain and sufficient evidence in Scripture that the Holy Spirit enlightens and visits all men : and here the whole truth is preserved in what we may call even balance, and one part corresponds with another, and there is a beautiful harmony throughout, and the whole proclaims the glorious universality and perfect impartiality of

the love of Jesus. Although at the same time we are perfectly aware that God is an omnipotent sovereign and disposes of us as he pleases, and we are not to inquire into his matters or to sit in judgment on the works of his providence,—and though we see but a very few links of an endless, boundless chain, of which we are totally incapable of forming any conception,—nevertheless, I do hold that this doctrine of the universal operation of the Spirit of the Lord is one of primary importance. I know it was boldly advocated in the face of the world by early Friends. I know that it has been since maintained steadfastly in every age of our religious society; and I hope, friends, it will always be precious to us, not because it is an opinion of our division of the church of Christ, but because it rests, as I believe, on the broad, immutable basis of simple truth; and so far is it from being peculiar to Friends, that I believe and know that thousands and tens of thousands are increasingly prepared to adopt the blessed doctrine of the universality of spiritual light. I can hardly refrain from saying, that on two very interesting occasions, when I was conversing in private with the late William Wilberforce, he assured me of his own conviction that an effective offer of salvation was made to every man born into the world. I thought it a good testimony from a person so well known in what is justly called the evan-

gelical world. And how should an effective offer of salvation be made to every man born into the world, but by the light of the Holy Spirit? My young friends may probably wish for more scriptural information on the subject; and, were I requested to point out one passage of Scripture which contains, in my opinion, a proof of the truth, in never-to-be-forgotten and very comprehensive words, I would point out that memorable passage in the beginning of John's Gospel; for in speaking of Christ in his divine character, in his original, eternal divinity, he says, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." These expressions are very precise, and they are elucidated by the Jewish literature of the day; for it was a common Jewish phrase to describe every existing mortal, man, woman, or child, to say, "every man born into the world." It was their current expression for this purpose, and peculiarly definite and precise in its meaning; and here is a declaration that Christ was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Now, we know that as a revealer of truth in an external point of view he was the light of the world; and when, in the fulness of time, he took upon him our nature and revealed the glorious gospel, it was like the rising of the morning sun, scattering

all the shadows of night and of twilight. Let us never disparage that glorious light for a moment; but we know that the light of an outward revelation, up to the time when the apostle wrote these sentences, was very partially communicated to the children of men, and we may therefore safely conclude—nay, we must conclude—that there was some other respect in which Christ was the light which lighteth every man born into the world. And how could this be? There is but one way in which we can explain it; namely, that by his Spirit he doth give some light to all the children of men.

Now, this subject is fully developed, as I apprehend, in the 1st, 2d, and 3d chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle Paul is speaking of the degeneracy, the idolatry, and the wickedness of the Gentile world. On what grounds does the apostle convict the Gentile world of sin? What is sin? Sin is the transgression of the law. What law were those Gentiles in possession of? They might indeed derive some faint traces of it from original tradition, and I do not doubt that they did. Some of their most inquisitive philosophers might probably borrow some rays of light from their Jewish neighbours, though the Jews were very little known: probably they did. But the plainest argument upon which he convinces them of sin rests on the broad basis that

some light was bestowed upon them, which gave them each their responsibility to a superior Being; and he expressly says, "that which is known of God was manifest in them; it was manifest in their consciences;" and I believe there is no man living, whose intellectual faculties are in any degree developed, who does not feel, in spite of himself, that he is responsible for his actions to a superior Being,—to one who will be his Judge, and who will reward or punish him according to his works. But not only so; there was a moral law known to these Gentiles; for the apostle expressly says, that though they knew the just judgments of God, that those who do these things (speaking of their criminal practices) are worthy of death, yet they not only did them, but rejoiced in all who did the same; or words to that effect. How did they know those just judgments of God? How did they know this righteous rule? (as the words may be rendered.) Why, it was written upon their hearts; and in the next chapter the apostle still further unfolds this subject, and speaks of many of the Gentiles who actually did the works of the law, though they were without the law in its outward revelation. They did by nature, without any outward revelation, the things contained in the law, "which shows the works of the law written on their hearts," says the apostle, "their consciences also bearing them witness, and

their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." And he even describes them as justified by their faith: they believed in Jesus as far as he was revealed to them, and they proved their faith by their works, and his law was written on their hearts.

Now, when we take into view the great doctrine of human corruption, that man is utterly corrupt, and dead in all wickedness,—if we call to mind the same apostle's declaration, "I know that in me (that is to say, in my flesh, my carnal mind) there dwelleth no good thing,"—how are we to account for this very good thing which is written on his heart? How are we to account for the law of God written on the hearts of men? the law which is holy and just and pure, and, though it may shine very faintly, is always the same in its nature? Are we to solicit this at man's carnal hand? Is it a system which man may work for himself? No: the internal principles of the moral law shine by their own light; they are the invention of no human reasoning; they are the discovery of no human philosophy; it is a light bestowed upon all the children of men, not belonging to their corrupt and carnal nature, in which there is no good thing, but given to them, as we believe, (and, I trust, shall always believe,) through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. He purchased it for them by that precious offering which he made on the cross for the sins

of all mankind. Oh, what a blessed boon ! and what a most comforting and satisfactory doctrine ! that we not only receive the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, but the same precious blood-shedding has procured for us the universal light of God's Holy Spirit, shining in various degrees and various measures,—very faintly in some cases, but always the same in its nature.

It is sometimes observed, that some of the poor heathen, who are in an extremely degraded state, know very little of this law; and certainly the light appears to shine very faintly in them. But their rational faculties are not developed; they are like very little children in that respect; some may be compared to idiots: and this blessed light is bestowed upon us as rational creatures, and it is as the rational faculties come to be developed that the moral principle also shows itself. I was thinking of a remarkable conversation which took place between a Baptist missionary of my acquaintance, and some poor Hindoos, with reference to this subject. Their rational faculties are much more developed than those of the original inhabitants of New South Wales: they are very prone to reason. He was preaching to a company of those persons on the subject of sin. "What is sin?" said one of them. "Sin, my brother, is the transgression of the law," said the preacher. "But what law do you mean? I do not admit

your Bible, neither do you admit mine." "But I will tell you what law I mean. When you go to the fair, or to the market-place, and cheat, or lie, or steal, you feel that there is something within you that tells you that it is wrong: that is the law I mean; sin is the transgression of that law." "Oh, now, brother," said he, "I admit your argument is right;" and so the dispute was easily settled.

There are some very interesting passages in the works of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, in reference to this subject: I wish my young friends were well acquainted with them. I am not going to compare them with the broad daylight of the gospel; but still those persons had some light, and they had more light than can be accounted for by any thing short of a few rays from the blessed source of the Sun of righteousness. I remember one passage in Cicero more particularly, which I think peculiarly interesting. I cannot now repeat it exactly, but he tells us that there is a law which deters from crime on the one hand, and impels to duty on the other; which no man can alter, to which nothing can be added; which can never be abrogated; which is not one thing at one time and one thing at another, one thing at Rome and another thing at Athens; but, says he, the same eternal and comprehensive law, of the same eternal and unchanging God, comprehends all men in all ages; and

those who refuse to obey that God who is the institutor of this law involve themselves in certain misery and penal consequences, although they may escape what the world calls punishment. Now, what a luminous passage ! And shall *we* pretend to deny the existence of this law ? I hope, friends, we shall more and more feel the importance of it, and that we shall remember not only that this light truly shines in the heart of man, but that it is our bounden duty—nay, it is our very life—to obey it ; and those who follow the light which is given to them will have more light ; and they will be led from one degree of virtue to another, by the power of the Lord's Spirit; for not only is there the universal diffusion of moral light, but there is also the additional visitation of divine power connected with it. I believe that every man born into the world has his day of visitation ; and I apprehend that it is the plain doctrine of Scripture, contained in the passage to which I have now referred, that Christ, by his Spirit, is that true light which lighteth every man that is born into the world. And if this is not plain reasoning and plain evidence, (and if it doth not coincide with common expressions, I know not what can be plainer or more consistent with that expression,) I know not what is.

But, while we speak of the universal operation of the influence of the Holy Spirit, we do

not forget for one moment the peculiar office of the Spirit; we do not forget that wondrous pouring forth of spiritual influence which resulted in the existence of the Holy Scriptures. We do not forget that God, as a universal sovereign, places his blessed light in whom he pleases, and when he pleases, and qualifies them for his own work. No; we gladly declare our unalterable conviction that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Scriptures, of a truth, do contain an especial revelation of doctrines to be believed, and of duties to be practised, and bear on themselves the royal stamp of divine authority, which never can be removed. We are blessed with that holy book; and are we to suppose that, being blessed with so precious, and so valuable, and so heavenly a gift, we are not to use it diligently, and that we are to sit down and expect a spiritual guidance, while we disuse the means that are put into our hands? Was that ever the doctrine of Friends? Never. Our early Friends were deeply read in Scripture. They knew the Scripture, many of them, from beginning to end; they spent days, and hours, and weeks, in solitude, and their Bibles were their companions,—an observation which applies with peculiar force to George Fox, who may be in some respects called the founder of our society. And Robert Barclay broadly asserts, that if any man proclaims any doctrine

or pretends to any morality which is contrary to the Scriptures, it is an invention of the devil. So say we in the present day. To the test, to the outward test, of Scripture, all doctrines, all precepts, all opinions, all notions, must be brought, and they must stand or fall by that test. Our forefathers in the truth were very particular in pointing the attention of their hearers to those remarkable verses with which the Bible is concluded, and which refer, in the first instance, clearly to the book of Revelation; that, if any man add to the things which are written in that book, God will add to him the plagues that are written in that book; and if any man take away from the things which are written in that book, God will take away his part out of the good things which are written in that book, and out of the book of life. Here we have the illumination of truth; here we have a clear outward test; but even this test must be used in reverent dependence on that Holy Spirit which gives faith. And from what do the Scriptures themselves derive their authority, but from immediate revelation, the immediate communication of the mind of God to the mind of man?

It is not our business to sit and speculate on the state of the heathen world: one thing we are quite sure of; that it is our bounden duty, as Christians, to labour for the benefit of the heathen world; and, with regard to their lot

when they stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, we must leave that to the equity and mercy of God. But to bring this important subject home to our own experience, as we are circumstanced here, I am bold to say, that if we would be Christians indeed, and really come to a practical and saving knowledge of Christianity, there is but one way, and that is by giving ourselves up to the guidance and government of the Holy Spirit, by which we are visited and enlightened in various degrees, from our very infancy. Oh, how inexpressibly important that we should maintain this blessed doctrine in all its strength and all its integrity! Would you know the truth, my dear young friends? would you understand the doctrines of religion? Would you be made sensible of their divine authority? Then learn to obey the still small voice of your inward teacher. "If any man do the will of my Father," said Jesus, "he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God." What can be clearer? Now, my young friends are not to expect the fulness of light all at once; they are to be diligent in reading the Scriptures much, and in private prayer; but, above all, let them take good care not to quench the Spirit. Obey the Spirit, follow the light of the Spirit of Christ, as it shines in your consciences, and you will have more light; and when the light comes, it shines more and more. It will make very important

discoveries to you. It will show you what poor, evil, wretched sinners you are; it will humble you under a sense of your sins, and then you will find a refuge in Jesus Christ, and him crucified. The convictions of the Holy Spirit, which are often very gradual in their nature, go on for many months and years, and, as it were, increase with the very growth of the young and ingenuous mind. If there be a faithful obedience, they lead to conversion; they lead to a settled faith in Jesus Christ; they lead out of all darkness into all light, and, at last, they bring the obedient and believing soul to the feet of Jesus; and then what a blessed change is wrought in the rational creature by faith! By faith we are justified; by faith we receive the forgiveness of our sins; by faith we are reconciled unto God; by faith we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Saviour. And then what is the practical knowledge? why, a much larger effusion of the Spirit is poured forth upon the mind. The light by which you have been led to Christ is redoubled and multiplied after you have come to Christ, according to his own words:—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." I hope this subject is now clear to the minds of my young friends. I hope you will never let in a single doubt or

difficulty upon it. I say it is as clear as the noonday sun.

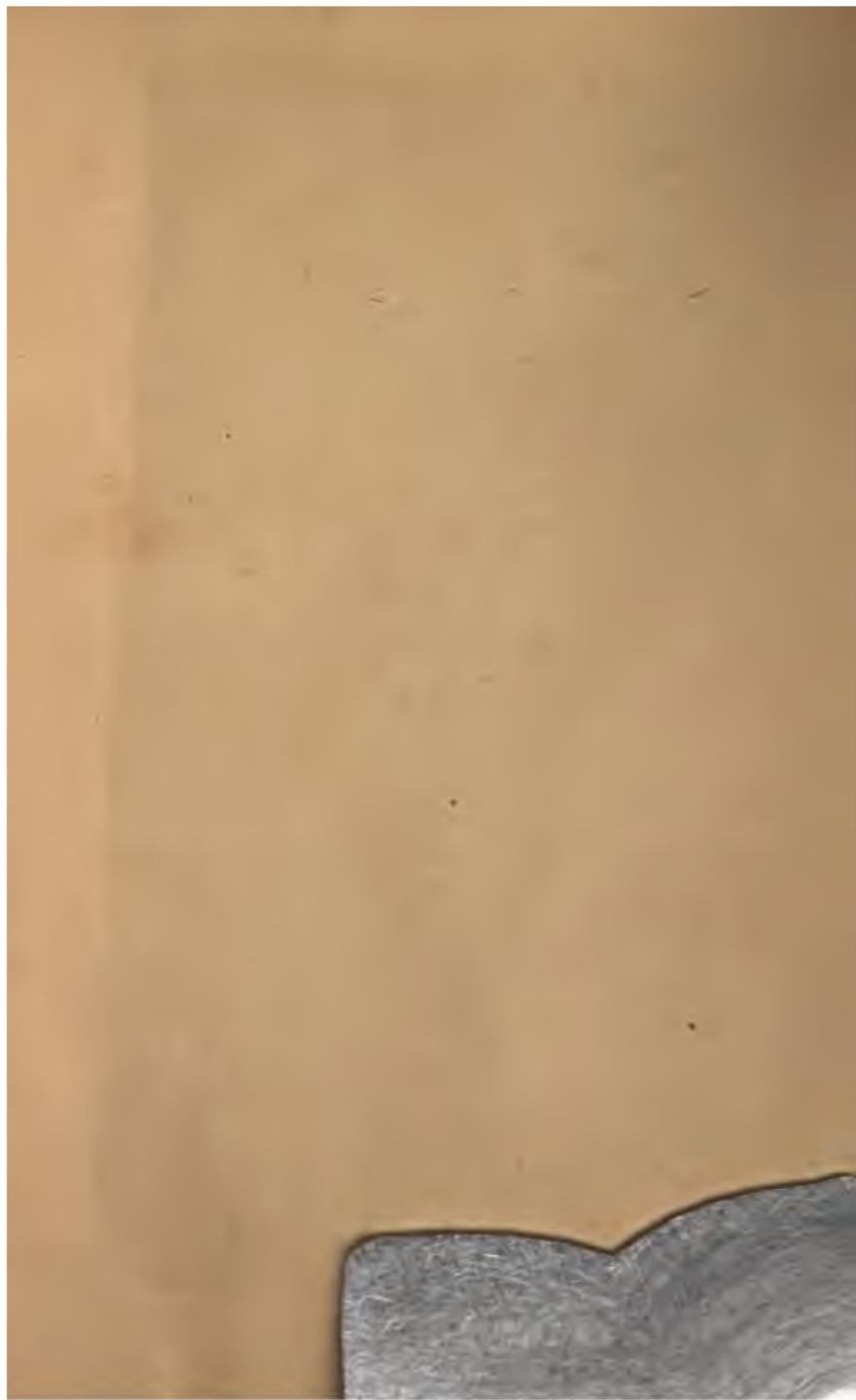
What is the peculiar privilege of Christian believers? What is the very characteristic of the new covenant? Turn to the 31st chapter of Jeremiah, and there you will see the characteristic of the new covenant:—"After those days, saith the Lord, I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah, and the house of Israel; I will write my law upon their hearts, and I will put it into their inward parts, and they shall not need to teach every man his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest, and I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more." So that under the glorious gospel dispensation we have no need to say every man to his brother, "Know the Lord;" we are not to depend on others' teaching; we are not to depend on human teaching; we are to have an all-sufficient teacher within,—the pre-eminent influence of the Holy Spirit, that will teach us to know God, that will lead us onward in the way of holiness, that will lead us in the way of all truth and of all happiness. Here is the pre-eminent privilege, here is the true characteristic of the gospel dispensation. This declaration in Jeremiah precisely agrees with those gracious promises of our Lord about the gift of the Comforter:—"When the Comforter

is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall guide you into all truth." "The world seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye see him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "I will come again," our Saviour says, in evident reference to the same doctrine:—"I will come again, I will see you again; because I live, ye shall live also." Again:—"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall take of mine and show it unto you." He shall not speak of himself, as I said before; he shall take of the things of Christ and show them to the believer; therefore, let us always keep this in view,—that in order rightly to comprehend the doctrines of religion, and the things of Christ, they must be unfolded to our understandings and impressed upon our hearts by the immediate act of the Comforter,—by the immediate communication of the mind of God to man,—by immediate revelation. Here is the root and ground of our principles, and they are plain scriptural principles. And not only does this light guide into a right view of Christian doctrines, not neglecting the Scriptures, but using them; it is also a guide to conduct; it leads into all holiness, as well as into all truth. "The anointing which you have received from him abideth in you," says John, in the second chapter of his Epistle; "and ye need not that any man teach

you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and it is truth and no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

I may, perhaps, have gone to almost too great a length in unfolding this subject; but I do so feel its practical importance, and I do so earnestly desire to clear the minds of my young friends on this subject, (if I may be made instrumental for the purpose,) knowing, as I do, the Holy Scriptures to be of such great importance to them. May we ever reverence, and diligently use them! They deal in general principles with regard to morals: with regard to conduct, we have general principles unfolded in the Holy Scriptures. How are we to apply those general principles to every act of our lives, to every circumstance of each passing hour? I say there is an infallible inward guide. I say there is not a man among us who does not hear a voice behind him, saying, "This is the way; walk thou in it." Oh, the importance of obeying this voice! Oh, the importance of being found practically faithful to the light of the Spirit of Christ, shining in our consciences:—"for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are his children, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" and may it be so with every soul in this assembly!

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